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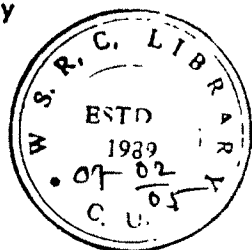
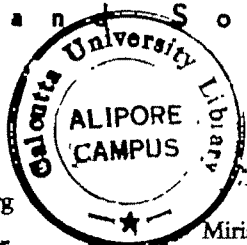
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**Cover:** Fujiko Isomura, *Cat & Woman* (2000) Hand-modified monoprint, acrylic, metal leaf, and ink jet print on watercolor paper, 17 × 27 inches. The Garfield character symbolizes the pretentious and self-interested male archetype, while the traditionally dressed Japanese woman symbolizes the patience associated with women in traditionally male-dominated societies. The cat experiences anguish as the woman applies pressure that inevitably will cause the cat to succumb reluctantly to her will; hiding gets him nowhere and brings no solace. In my work I bring together old and new icons and images from American and Japanese culture. The combination of images represents the history of two cultures as well as my personal thoughts about the world I am experiencing. © 2003 by Fujiko Isomura. Permission to reprint may be obtained only from the artist

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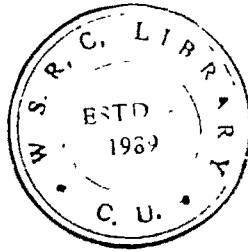


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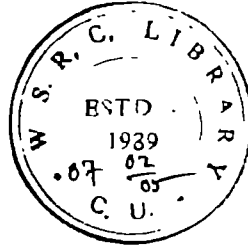
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## Call for Papers

### ***Signs* Special Issue: Dilemmas In Feminist Social Research**

**S***igns: Journal of Women In Culture and Society* seeks submissions for a special issue on "Dilemmas in Feminist Social Research," slated for publication in summer 2005. For three decades, feminists in the natural and social sciences have questioned not only the care with which research in history and the social sciences has been conducted but also the adequacy of standard methods to achieve their claimed goals. They have challenged the desirability of those goals and the philosophies of science that have prescribed them. They have introduced alternative research designs and theories of good method. Today many women's studies curricula require courses in research methods appropriate to feminist projects.

Yet thirty years of such work have not made feminist methods and methodological choices uncontroversial. Virtually all of the puzzling and troubling issues of feminist theory reappear in the context of methods. We solicit essays that address these controversies and, especially, that report how researchers' own liberatory methodological plans have had unexpected results intellectually or politically. How should the researcher position herself and her subjects in her research projects? What notions of the subjectivity of the researcher and of the researched are appropriate for feminist projects? How can one effectively bring the intersectionality of gender, race, class, sexuality, and culture to a research project? Can social research ever escape the "colonial model"? In which contexts can exposing the researcher's personal situation, experiences, voice, and emotions appropriately advance a research project, and in which contexts not? What limits should feminists impose on projects that "study down"? Should the standard restrictions on therapists' relations with their clients (not always honored, of course) hold for social researchers and their research subjects? Are some methods more liberatory than others, and wherein does such potential lie? What are the distinctive feminist issues about methods in history, sociology, political science, economics, anthropology, and other fields of social research? Why are methods *not* an issue in some feminist research areas?

The special issue editors are Sandra Harding (Graduate School of Education and Information Studies, UCLA) and Kathryn Norberg (history,

UCLA). Please submit articles (three copies) not later than October 31, 2003, to *Signs*, "Dilemmas in Feminist Social Research," University of California, Los Angeles, 1400H Public Policy Building, Los Angeles, CA 90095-7122.

Please observe the guidelines printed at the back of the most recent issues of the journal or at <http://www.journals.uchicago.edu/Signs/instruct.html>.

## **"If I'm one of the victims, who survives?": Marilyn Hacker's Breast Cancer Texts**

**F**eminist theory and practice are constantly confronted with the question of how to represent sexual oppression. Not wanting to deny the structural domination and day-to-day violence that most women experience, many feminists are equally preoccupied with acknowledging women's agency and recognizing their resistance. The feminist movement against domestic violence and sexual abuse, for example, has challenged the image of the passive battered woman. Speaking not of "victims" but of "survivors," it has shifted attention to the multitude of ways in which women resist both male violence and its social legitimation (see Mahoney 1994; Schneider 2000, 74–86). It has thereby addressed problematic categories such as individual agency and argued for more historically grounded approaches that reflect how, in the process of responding to external social constraints, agency is in fact constructed by these very constraints (see Scott 1990). As such, the movement has helped feminism to disturb the paradigm of "woman as victim" and of individualistic heroic action.

The women's breast cancer movement is characterized by similar attempts to assess the patient's seemingly passive response to her illness. It has explored social and political dimensions of the epidemic, questioned the doctor's benevolent paternalism, and insisted on the patient's right to make an informed decision. Examinations of these attempts—and their limits—will surely contribute to discussions on the experience of illness and to feminist debates on agency. Engaged in these examinations, I will focus in this article on the breast cancer writings of contemporary poet Marilyn Hacker. I begin by briefly looking at the narrative structure that underlies most recent accounts of the disease. Comparing those that highlight the doctor's heroic efforts with those that insist on the patient's, I will identify shortcomings with both. I will then turn to Hacker's work, examining the poetry and prose she wrote prior to and following detection

I would like to thank Margaret Bridges, Alexandra Chasin, Fabienne Michelet, and my two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article



of a lump and her subsequent mastectomy. Emphasizing her concern with narrative and poetic form, I will explore how she tries to reject literary modes that depend on closure, to undermine the "speciousness of a division between 'victims' and 'survivors'" (Hacker 1999, 218), and to conceive of alternate ways of considering our corporeal and textual beings.

### **Breast cancer narratives**

*Cancer* refers to an uncontrolled malignancy or cell growth with the potential to invade normal tissue and spread to other parts of the body that occurs in different organs or tissues. It is classified in terms of where it originally appears (breast, lung, skin, etc.) and by the type of cell from which it originates. More than one hundred different types of cancer have been identified, occurring in twenty-four different parts of the human body. Thus, although the term refers to a common phenomenon, cancers are in fact highly diverse, requiring different treatments and prognoses.

Breast cancer is among the most prevalent forms of cancer in North America and Europe and the most prevalent in the female-only population. But, even in this apparently homogenous cluster, the disease varies from person to person, depending on where in the breast the cancer is located (the ducts or the lobules), whether or not it is invasive, and the stage to which it has advanced. Information on the kind of breast cancer is crucial for determining treatment alternatives as well as in assessing the probability for survival (Love and Lindsey 2000, 324–47).

Even with the most optimistic prognosis, a breast cancer patient must continue to live with her disease. She must face the long- and short-term side effects of surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation (which continue to be standard treatment) as well as adjust to the limits her altered body places on her. These alterations may include the scarring and discomfort that result from the slightest biopsy to radical mastectomy; increased fatigue induced by chemotherapy; long-term side effects of chemotherapy and radiation; lifelong restrictions in arm use necessitated by the dissection of an axillary lymph node; menopausal symptoms; and, of course, mastectomy itself (Love and Lindsey 2000, 517–55). She must also adapt psychologically to these changes, confronting her illness and the loss of part or all of her breast(s). This adaptation is no small feat, given the centrality of breasts to cultural images of femininity. The breast cancer patient may also have to face possible economic sanctions that banks, insurance companies, and potential or current employers may impose as a result of her diagnosis. Finally, given that prognosis is never more than

a statistical evaluation, she must continue to live with the threat of recurrence.

If I recall the above information on breast cancer, it is because, in what follows, I do not want to deny the physical and somatic aspects of the disease that play a determining factor in who survives and who does not. Nor do I want to minimize either the psychological burden cancer places on the patient or the variety of experiences of the disease. By examining medical and autobiographical discourses, I want to focus instead on the way in which a general cultural imaginary structures these experiences. Identifying these underlying structures is part of the process of understanding how we—as patients, doctors, social workers, and members of a larger community—must collectively and individually come to terms with the toils of breast cancer.

Until recently, cancer has been figured as a chaotic, uncontrollable invasion of the body that needs to be dominated and mastered through different kinds of heroic exploits (Sontag 1990; Stacey 1997). As the title of Barron H. Lerner's recent history of breast cancer politics, *The Breast Cancer Wars* (2001), makes clear, programs for developing a cure for cancer and for its prevention have been frequently referred to as "wars," thereby representing the actors of these "campaigns" and "strategies" as brave soldiers involved in courageous combat. Although, as we shall see, the leading role in these combats is increasingly attributed to the patient, more often than not the surgeon has been vested with the task of saving the life of the passive victim.

This tendency to valorize the doctor's heroism is, of course, not specific to breast cancer but part of a more general cultural history of surgical intervention. Yet, given the gender configurations of our society, it is even more pervasive and pernicious where women are concerned. During the heyday (c. 1915–70) of radical mastectomy, perfected by Johns Hopkins surgeon William Steward Halsted, male surgeons were less likely to question the implications of excising an older woman's breast because their cultural bias deemed these organs "expendable" (Lerner 2001, 68–91, esp. 88–91). The emphasis on the passive role of the female cancer patient may even have endangered her life. Faith in the Manichean combat between the good surgeon and the evil cancer prevented explorations of the ways in which the woman's body, namely through her immune system, contributed to reproducing and spreading the disease (Leopold 1999, 45–81). According little importance to the patient's experience of the disease, the glorification of the surgeon's struggles, along with cultural norms of modesty and discretion as appropriately "feminine" behavior,

contributed to silencing any expression of suffering, discomfort, and pain and thereby denied much needed emotional support.<sup>1</sup>

Changes in medical practices have revised the model. With a growing insistence on preventive measures and early detection routines through breast exams and mammographies came an increasing need to rely on prospective patients' cooperation. Informed by consciousness-raising techniques promoted by feminism and by studies revealing the important role of support networks in coping with illness and its aftermath, the breast cancer self-help movement has persuaded women to discuss the anxieties and sufferings related to illness and to break the silence that surrounds it (Taylor and Van Willigen 1996; Leopold 1999, 188–214; Benner 2000). Rejecting the designation "cancer victim" for that of "cancer survivor," it has "encouraged women to express pride in and garner strength from their cancer experiences" (Taylor and Van Willigen 1996, 129).

Granting women a more active presence in accounts of the disease, breast cancer narratives have shifted emphasis from surgeon hagiographies to stories of women's struggle against the disease (Leopold 1999, 153–284; Fosket, Karran, and LaFia 2000; Lerner 2001, 141–96). Recent breast cancer autobiographies, for instance, have focused attention on the patient's experience. Emphasizing her own understanding of her illness, the patient expresses her fears, insists on her search for more information, and accentuates her attempt to surmount her difficulties. In the process, she highlights the discrepancy between the doctor's account and hers and thereby denounces medicine's authoritarian monologism.<sup>2</sup> Thanks to the public discussions elicited by these works and to advocacy, lobbying, and campaigning, the U.S. women's breast cancer movement has been able to redefine the breast cancer research agenda and treatment strategies by placing the patient's concerns at the center (Benner 2000; Casamayou 2001; Lerner 2001, 170–96, 223–41).

These recent attempts to reposition the female cancer patient as actively engaged in fighting against her breast cancer have nevertheless produced new problems. Although early detection programs offset surgeons' disregard for the patient's point of view, when surgeons rely excessively on mammographies, they have a tendency to ignore a woman's assessment, resulting very often in misdiagnosis (Fosket 2000). Yet the other extreme, which places increasing emphasis on patient responsibility in diagnosing and surviving illness, has its own limits because it foregrounds a vision of

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion of Rachel Cannon's breast cancer in Leopold 1999, 111–50.

<sup>2</sup> For studies of some of these works as well as extensive bibliographies, see Hawkins 1993; Potts 2000.

triumphant individual autonomy at the expense of more socially located and disjunctive conceptions of the self. For if, as Laura Potts (2000) has argued, many breast cancer autobiographies explore the complex process of subject formation through discursive interactions and negotiations, they nevertheless privilege the search for individual self-knowledge and self-identity. As such, they are characterized by the questlike structure that Anne Hunsaker Hawkins (1993) has identified in numerous contemporary "self-pathographies." As in the myths that tell how, in his search for self-identity, a hero must confront a series of inexorable barriers and trials before attaining self-knowledge, in these life stories, the trauma of cancer provides the chance of finding oneself. Hawkins even suggests that the recent popularity of the genre lies in its adventure-tale-like structure.

In the case of Audre Lorde's *Cancer Journals* (1980) and Sandra Butler's and Barbara Rosenblum's *Cancer in Two Voices* (1991), this identity is a collective one.<sup>3</sup> Addressing the political economy of the disease and of suffering, they try to speak for and to other black, lesbian, and poor women. But these attempts to move beyond individual heroism are the exception more than the rule. Most cancer narratives efface accounts of the patient's ongoing suffering and discussions of environmental, social, and political factors, including issues of race, class, and sexuality, directly related to coping with the disease.

A similar emphasis on individual action and responsibility appears in certain strains of the woman's breast cancer movement, or so Maren Klawiter suggests in her ethnography of public happenings. Discussing the Susan B. Komen Foundation's "Race for the Cure," a breast cancer fund-raising event sponsored by a leading North American mainstream organization, she observes: "In the discourse of the Race, survival is a matter of individual choice and responsibility. Regular mammograms never fail to diagnose breast cancer early and women diagnosed early never die. For those who practise breast health, breast cancer may constitute a momentary setback but it is not a debilitating, recurring or chronic disease. In the discourse of the Race, breast cancer is part of each survivor's historical biography. A finished chapter. In this discourse, breast cancer is a disease of universal, individual, ahistorical, resilient, reconstructable, heterofeminine, biologically female bodies" (2000, 74).<sup>4</sup>

Klawiter's description calls attention to a number of problems with the

<sup>3</sup> Other recent autobiographical breast cancer narratives that have attempted to use the writer's experience to question the politics and ideologies of breast cancer include Kushner 1975; Batt 1994; and Sedgwick 1999.

<sup>4</sup> For information on the foundation, see Benner 2000, Klawiter 2000.

discursive structure of the race. First, it casts patients as "heroines of their own lives,"<sup>5</sup> placing the burden of individual choice and responsibility squarely on their shoulders. In so doing, it effaces differences among women. Neither variations in medical prognoses nor social, economic, and political factors that inflect women's experience of breast cancer are emphasized. The discourse, moreover, depends on a linear narrative that asserts coherence on the experience of sickness by enforcing closure: either the patient dies, or she is cured. As such, it fails to address the more disruptive and disjunctive experiences of many patients, which do not move unilaterally and unequivocally in a desired direction. By highlighting optimistic stories of individual triumph and bravery, it fails to speak of the many and continuing interludes of suffering, anger, and emotional hardship that overlap and even disturb the strictly linear pattern. Finally, the discourse of the race does not sufficiently acknowledge the prevalence of death, which, despite the numerous biomedical advances of recent years, remains, for many breast cancer patients, very much a part of the experience (Fosket, Karran, and LaFia 2000; Kasper and Ferguson 2000, 371).

I have been focusing on the shortcomings of prevalent models of breast cancer experience that overemphasize patient responsibility. Resisting this emphasis might contribute to a far more insightful understanding of the complexities of women's experiences with breast cancer. It will invite increasing and concerted reflection on the resources that must be made available for cancer patients to cope since, however laudable, inner strength is not always sufficient.<sup>6</sup> A contextual approach to the cancer patient's agency may also question the problematic narratives of modernist med-

<sup>5</sup> I am alluding to Joan Scott's review of Linda Gordon's book of the same title, *Heroes of Their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (1988), which in turn refers to Charles Dickens's *David Copperfield*. Discussing Gordon's history of family violence in the United States, Scott criticizes its perception of individuals as "autonomous origins of their own actions" and its failure to develop a more elaborate concept of agency (Scott 1990, 850). Integrating more complex approaches to cancer patients' agency is a crucial part of understanding the effects of the epidemic on women's lives. For a recent attempt to incorporate such an approach, see Potts 2000; Rosenbaum 2000.

<sup>6</sup> Related to the importance of a contextual approach to agency is the need to recognize that cancer patients do not always have the same needs and may opt for different choices. For some women, fear of losing a breast is primordial, whereas for others an immediate double mastectomy may offer more long-term satisfaction. Kathy Acker (1997), for instance, explains how the latter was a more desirable choice in view of the fact that she "feared chemotherapy" even more and that she had limited insurance coverage. Describing her postmastectomy feelings, Marilyn Hacker claims, "This has never been, for me, about losing a breast" (1999, 212). For different attempts to address these issues, see Hardisty and Leopold 1993; Kasper 2000; Simpson 2000; Zones 2000.

icine, structured around heroic action (be it the doctor's or the patient's) and dependent on closure (be it in death or in cure). For, as one writer and breast cancer patient argues, alternative models are clearly needed to help patients think through their experiences: "We needed new models of experience. We needed new metaphors. No sinking ships. No heroic victims" (Raz 1999, xvii).

I would now like to turn to some recent attempts to rethink these dominant models. In his provocative study of illness narratives, Arthur Frank has suggested that the linear and coherent quest narrative is being replaced by what he calls "chaos narratives" (1995, 97–114). Refusing to emphasize the resilience of the human spirit, such accounts dwell instead on the catastrophe that has befallen the speaker without necessarily being able to identify its nature or locate its cause. The speaker hovers incessantly around an overdetermined but unnameable suffering through sequential enumerations of different ailments. This syntax neither prioritizes problems nor establishes causal links between them. Frank insists on the ethical obligation to listen to these stories without imposing any logical coherence or narrative closure. The challenge, he argues, is "to hear" (101), a challenge that, he insists, is doubly difficult. On the one hand, the person's narrative "cannot tell enough of its own story to formulate its needs and ask for help; often it cannot even accept help when offered" (110). On the other, the listeners do not want to face "what is being said as a possibility or a reality in their own lives" (101).

These chaos narratives go against the basic premise of modernist medicine, structured as it is around linear narratives of rehabilitation and restitution (Frank 1995, 75–96).<sup>7</sup> Ignoring the endless repetitions and silences that seem to lead nowhere, modernist medicine seeks to affirm that the patient is cured and to restore her to a life of health and functional normality. Borrowing from developments in trauma studies, Frank suggests that autobiographies and self-stories by the sick may play a key role in questioning this kind of medical discourse by witnessing the chaos they have experienced. Contrary to the adventure-story-like quest narrative, these testimonies are not guidebooks or survival manuals of how to live with the disease but rather invocations of the difficulties of the experience itself.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Frank contrasts *modernist* with *postmodernist* medicine, whereas the former depends on a linear narrative and on closure, the latter does not. My use of the term in this article depends on this distinction.

<sup>8</sup> A good example of a chaos story in the literature of breast cancer self-stories is Ruth Picardie's 1998 *Before I Say Goodbye*. The text is a compilation of newspaper columns written by the author; e-mail correspondence to and from friends; letters she received from readers in response to her columns; and narratives written by her husband and sister that detail the

However useful for the patient and for her doctor, chaos narratives remain, as Frank acknowledges, difficult to read and to understand. Indulging in the excess of particulars related to a given life trajectory, they may fail to promote an account that makes sense outside the specific context. A more intermediate narrative, shuttling between a linear chronology of recovery and progress, on the one hand, and the enumeration of overdetermined and overwhelming problems, on the other, is necessary to transmit the experience of the disease for professional, political, and personal reasons. Such alternative and experimental models will not be found in clinical situations but rather in self-conscious literary production that seeks to question the limits of narrative and poetic forms, even as it remains inimically marked and constrained by them.

It is for this reason that, in this article, I focus on Marilyn Hacker's prose and poetry on her experience with breast cancer and explore her self-conscious search for a new narrative model and for "another metaphor" (1994b, 81). I will first explore her dissatisfaction with existing models that depend on closure. I will then look at how her poetry problematizes accounts of triumphant individual heroism. In the final part of this article, I will address Hacker's concern with traditional poetic form. I will suggest that her interest in formal innovations also forces her to acknowledge linguistic, narrative, and poetic constraints from which it is impossible to escape. Caught between literary conventions and the desire to revolutionize them, her work invites us to reflect on how experience with disease molds our narratives as well as on how narrative fashions and determines this experience. In so doing, it urges us to acknowledge more complicated conceptions of agency and self-identity that are crucial to rethinking the breast cancer experience.

### **"I woke up, still alive. Does that mean 'cured'?"**

One of the most prolific and gifted poets of her generation, Hacker has been the editor of several poetry journals, including the feminist *Thirteenth Moon*, the politically engaged *Ploughshares*, and the prestigious *Kenyon Review*. As such, she has played an important part in shaping the landscape of contemporary North American poetry by promoting the voices of gay men and lesbians, women, and people of color and by recognizing the

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final months of her life, when the cancer that spread to her brain prevented her from writing. This account refuses the heroic success story by insisting on Picardie's growing incoherence. It deindividualizes the disease and the localization of the suffering. By adopting a plurality of voices, it rejects an interpretive coherence to the events and insists on both positive and negative aspects of the collective experience.

poetry of politically resonant writing. As an outspoken "queer" writer, she has charted the politics of her experience. Her 1994 *Winter Numbers*, winner of the National Book Award for Poetry, laments the loss of friends and allies to the HIV/AIDS and breast cancer epidemics and recounts her own struggle with the latter. Hacker sees no contradiction between her support for what may seem to be "politically correct" poetry and her interest in the formal exigencies of the sonnet (Campo 1996). On the contrary, her comments on the politics of form reveal a self-conscious awareness of narrative and prosodic constraints on textual production (see Finch 1996; Ellis et al. 2000) that renders her work a promising terrain for exploring the modes through which breast cancer experiences can be represented.

Cancer has long been a central topic of Hacker's poetry, perhaps because her father died at age forty-eight of pancreatic cancer (Campo 1996). Prior to her diagnosis, Hacker had written a number of poems about breast cancer more specifically, including "Against Elegies," "Letter to Julie in a New Decade," and "Year's End," where she considers how it is killing friends and contemporaries. Following her mastectomy and chemotherapy, she wrote poems, such as "Cancer Winter" and "August Journal," that reflect on her medical experience. Her most recent volume of poetry, *Squares and Courtyards* (2000), contains several poems, namely "Invocation" and "Scars on Papers," on how she continues to "survive" breast cancer. Finally, in addition to these works, she has also published "Journal Entries" (1999), excerpts from the notebooks she kept when undergoing treatment that can be read against and with the poems.

In order to distinguish between medical diagnosis and Hacker's narratives of illness, I would like to begin by offering a brief reconstruction of the events surrounding the detection of a lump, based on information provided in "Journal Entries." After discovering a "mass in [her] right breast" (1999, 207) during a routine mammography, she had an excision biopsy, immediately followed by a "modified radical mastectomy," which included the removal of "some of [her] pectoralis minor and nearly all of the lymph nodes in [her] right armpit" (209). She subsequently discovered that the excision biopsy had in fact "extirpated the localized cancer" (212), which was diagnosed as "infiltrative ductal carcinoma, one cm in size, with a microscopic secondary tumor, but no lymph node involvement detected" (216). In addition to surgery, she also underwent six cycles of chemotherapy.

Medically speaking, her diagnosis offers a fairly good prognosis (Love and Lindsey 2000, 324-46). Hacker's writings, however, do not dwell on the relative optimism of the medical report and focus instead, as we



shall see, on the aftermath of discovering the lump. Moreover, whereas my reconstruction implies a unilateral movement toward cure, I will argue that the self-conscious literary form she adopts in her different cancer writings disrupts this movement. Indeed, despite the title and my summary, "Journal Entries" is a two-tiered and self-conscious document, making it at times difficult for readers to distinguish between events as they happened and their subsequent representation. Yet I will also suggest that the narrative disruption and the literary self-consciousness are strained, however paradoxically, by an opposing desire for linearity and coherence.

Consider first the way in which Hacker's cancer experience has inflected her literary production. The romance-like structure of the heroic quest underlies the chronology of her work that I outlined above. The successive moments in Hacker's literary production call attention to her sudden awareness of the fragility of her body and of her earlier hubris in writing how others died of cancer while she remained untouched, "a witness, a survivor, caught / in the maelstrom and brought forth, who knew more / of pain than some, but learned it loving others" (1994b, 81). This awareness is followed by an account of the trials she undergoes as she enters the socially liminal area occupied by the ill. Dwelling on these trials, her work plots her increasing enlightenment about the precariousness of life and seems to conclude positively by pronouncing her return to health. This pattern, moreover, appears both in "Journal Entries" and the three poems—"Year's End," "Cancer Winter," and "August Journal"—that constitute the "Cancer Winter" sequence of *Winter Numbers*. In "Journal Entries," for instance, she expresses her shame at the "terrible lines" she wrote earlier that "now . . . seem like an affront to women and men who *have* had cancer, who are alive with their scars, with their nightmares, with their courage, with whatever else I don't know, or don't know yet" (1999, 210). Echoing these comments in her "Cancer Winter," she notes equally self-consciously that "It's become a form of gallows humor / to reread the elegies I wrote" (1994b, 81).

Yet the narrative structure of both her "Journal Entries" and the related poems refuse this movement toward growing self-knowledge. Abandoning a strictly temporal sequence, the former alternates between comments dating from 1993, when she was undergoing treatment, and others from 1995, when she reflects back self-consciously on these moments. An entry dated February 7, 1993, that mentions how "renewed, energetic, better" she feels "the few times we've made love since the hospital" (Hacker 1999, 223) is followed by another, dated July 1995. The latter notes, "How blithely and (again) solipsistically I referred to 'sex,' as if I were trying to prove something to myself, or to an imaginary reader over my shoulder" (224).

A similar juxtaposition appears in Hacker's "Cancer Winter." The odd and even sonnets of the series alternate between her experiences in the hospital and those subsequent to them. Whereas the first group tells the "too-familiar story of breast lump discovery and its attendant events" (1999, 240), the second one charts how she comes to terms with her terror. Continuity is maintained by repeating the final line of an odd-numbered sonnet in the first line of the next odd-numbered one (that is, after it has been interrupted by one from the even-numbered group). Reminiscent of John Donne's "La Corona," as Melissa Zeiger reminds us (1997, 159–65), this formal repetition replays poetic structures Hacker adopts in her earlier work, such as her 1974 "A Christmas Crown" (in 1994a, 39–45). In "Cancer Winter," the intertwining of the sonnets produces an echo effect that disturbs a strictly temporal reading of the cycle.

Elsewhere, Hacker's breast cancer writings are structured around the repetition of key terms, such as *cured*, which further disrupts any linear coherence. To close the entry dated January 4, 1993, which dwells on the events leading up to her mastectomy, Hacker describes her operation: "How are you feeling?" asked the anesthesiologist again. 'Still scared shitless.' Dr. Curry [the surgeon] sat next to me on a wooden stool (the now-familiar hydra-headed O.R. lights above my head) until—'I'm not asleep yet,' and I was asleep. And then, without a paragraph break, I was back on the gurney in the inpatient surgical recovery room, Dr. Curry in my direct line of vision. 'It's all over. You're cured'" (1999, 210).

This description stages the encounter between the patient and medical professionals, dramatizing potential contentions in their understanding of what is occurring or has just occurred. The iterative aspect (suggested by the adverbs "again" and "still") and the sense of *déjà vu* (the lights are "familiar") refer partly to the biopsy that has immediately preceded the mastectomy, partly to the narrative organization of the entire entry for January 4. After all, the interchange with the anesthesiologist is repeated three times in the course of this entry: once at the proleptic beginning that announces that Hacker has "lost a breast . . . [but] intend[s] . . . to live," even if she is "scared shitless" (1999, 206); once before he injects her, preparing her for her excision biopsy (208); and once in the above-cited scene. Punctuating the account of her stay in the hospital, these exchanges produce a closed, cyclical structure that captures the monotony and regularity inpatients experience. In the above-cited passage, this monotonous experience is further accentuated by recourse to techniques common to those identified with dreams. The lights of the highly technological hospital are assimilated to the mythic landscape of hell, whereas temporal gaps and ruptures are emphasized through a self-conscious ref-

crence to writing itself. Interestingly enough, the doctor intervenes like a latter-day Prince Charming, making the patient's awakening resemble that of a fairy-tale heroine.

But if, in Hacker's account, the surgeon tries to impose a romance-like closure, the interchange with the anesthesiologist allows us to resist this attempt. The repeated exchanges call attention to the different meanings attributed to the question. Interested in establishing contact for professional reasons, the doctor wants a clinical assessment. The patient describes, however, her existential state and her overwhelming fears. Similarly, when the surgeon proclaims, "It's all over. You're cured," we cannot but ask of what is she cured, her cancer or her nightmarish fears. This question elicits others: whether in fact it really is over and whether she is in fact cured.

Not surprisingly, her journal entries subsequently return to these very questions. "I feel best, of course," she writes, "when I'm not thinking about cancer, or when I'm concentrating on the arm and shoulder exercises, as if I *had* been in a car crash, as if the surgery had been, as Dr. Curry called it, a 'cure'" (Hacker 1999, 220). Here, Hacker deliberately distances herself from the doctor's expressions, suggesting that she has a different understanding of the operation.

This difference becomes more apparent when read against "Cancer Winter." The second sonnet in the fourteen-sonnet sequence echoes the journal entry, opening with "I woke up, and the surgeon said, 'You're cured'" (Hacker 1994b, 78). In the poem, however, it is Hacker who, despite her "morphine haze[d]" postsurgical condition, is "avidly aware / of my own breathing, my thirst, that it was over—/ the week that ended on this New Year's Eve" (81). Even if we recognize how the syntax maintains a certain ambiguity as to what exactly is over—the week or the surgery, the breathing or the thirst—it is nevertheless clear that the poet, unlike the doctor, distinguishes between the end of surgery and being cured.

As such, Hacker's account betrays her discomfort with the closure that modernist medicine would like to impose on her experience. For her, mastectomy does not put an end to her encounter with cancer; it does not guarantee her return to normality as in the restitution narrative Dr. Curry would like to write. On the contrary, it announces the beginning of an even more frightening confrontation with life. Hacker must patiently sit out the statistically determined risk-of-recurrence period and even then continue to mark "the distance on a calendar / from what's less likely each year to 'recur'" (2000, 24). She must also begin her life again after having "been falling off a cliff" (1999, 206). Having "lost a breast and

a metaphor" (206), she must identify a new mode of living and writing. Small wonder, then, that instead of proclaiming, "It's all over," she asks, "Now what?" (206). Small wonder too that "Cancer Winter" closes on a similar question: "Unremarkable, / I woke up, still alive. Does that mean 'cured'?" (1994b, 90).

This conclusion is, of course, an ironic reminder that breast cancer is a disease that is never really cured. Not only is the risk of recurrence particularly high, but other cancers may appear following the five-year "safe period." Needless to say this statistical fact impinges on the life of breast cancer survivors who remain, as I indicated earlier, subject to medical surveillance as well as to different forms of social exclusions. In addition to the specifics of breast cancer, the ending also raises more general questions on narratives and on survival. Interrogating the surgeon's assimilation of surviving surgery with "it's all over," the poem leaves us haunted with the troubling question of what exactly it is to be "cured."

I have been arguing that in describing her mastectomy, Hacker the patient rejects the closure the surgeon Dr. Curry would like to impose. Even if this reading invites a critical assessment of the linear narrative of modernist medicine, it nevertheless depends on a diametrical opposition between the naive but increasingly self-aware patient and the hardened and autocratic medical professional. As such—and despite my arguments to the contrary—the encounter is cast in highly melodramatic terms that recall the conventional quest romance of prevalent cancer narratives. A closer reading of "Journal Entries" nevertheless invites a reevaluation of this assessment. In the entry for January 6, 1993, two days—but, given the manner in which the present is interwoven with the past, several entries—after surgery, Hacker mentions that she has been reading Edith Konecky's *A Place at the Table*. She notes how in the novel the "protagonist is told by the doctors, 'You *had* cancer, it's over. Now go and live your life.'" She comments, "Is that what Dr. Curry said to me? Would I have believed him?" (1999, 214).

A strange echo of Hacker's earlier remarks, this episode invites us to reconsider the way in which she has represented the discussions with her doctor. Because these questions and doubts appear after she tells us what he said, they trouble the truth claims of the earlier moments and reinforce the hazy, dreamlike quality that characterizes the scene in the operating room. More interestingly, they seem to suggest that perhaps it is not Dr. Curry who imposes closure on her; perhaps she projects and transfers her own desire for an end to illness and for a return to "normal" life onto him. Indeed, given the surgeon's credentials (he is recommended by a breast cancer activist as a good surgeon; see 1999, 208), his villainous

role in the account Hacker tells is rather unlikely. Moreover, given her predilection for self-conscious references to writing and for language games characteristic of dream work, we cannot but wonder whether she exploits the phonetic resonance of his name. For Curry can be pronounced to sound like the spicy dish (curry) and like the late nineteenth-century Polish scientist who is responsible for the discovery of radiation (Curie). In the latter case, the doctor's name is marked by the cure she hopes he will pronounce. Finally, by comparing herself to the protagonist in a novel, the narrative reminds us that she may well be casting herself as the "heroine of her own life." In so doing, Hacker's narrative not only cautions against the desire for closure enforced by available medical models and metaphors but also warns us of the equally strong desire for a return to normality the patient must learn to resist.

Elsewhere, Hacker's "Journal Entries" reveals a self-conscious awareness of available models. She refers to her experience immediately following detection as a "melodrama" (1999, 207) and as the "too-familiar story of breast lump discovery and its attendant events" (240). She thus recognizes a formal structure and tone that she finds dissatisfying. Speaking of the possibility of returning to a sexually active life, she queries, "This is no time to ask her [K. J., her partner] / ask myself, will we ever have a—what would be the word—normal? normally queer? regularly irregular sex life again?" (223). Examining available terminology, she self-consciously alerts us to the limits language places on attempts to describe her experience.<sup>9</sup>

Most significant, perhaps, Hacker struggles with the constraints of the adventure story inherent in many contemporary accounts of illness and specifically with the implicit distinction between "survivor" and "victim." In the aftermath of her operation and while undergoing chemotherapy, she is caught up with the day-to-day process of her survival. As she "envision[s] a positive goal . . . to live and appreciate [her] life" (1999, 214) and "enact[s] / survivor's rituals" (2000, 15), she again casts herself as the melodramatic heroine of a quest narrative. Abandoning her earlier assimilation of cancer with death (1999, 206), she begins to write instead about "cancer not as the unknown but certain doom, but the trial I'm living through" (218). Yet she soon discovers that the questlike narrative associated with this trial is unsatisfactory. She rejects the numerous self-

<sup>9</sup> Although I do not develop this point here, it is worth noting that "Journal Entries" is as self-conscious about the term *normal* as it is about *cured*. As in this example, on more than one instance, it invites a critical assessment of "normal" sex, relating questions of illness to those of sexuality.

help books: they "frighten" her because of their gruesome and depressing details or because of their undaunted belief in "willpower" (220). Similarly, she sees in Adrienne Rich's "A Woman Dead in Her Forties" (in *The Fact of a Doorframe* [1984]) an echo of her own "bleak elegy" (1999, 218). Dissatisfied with these overwhelmingly depressing accounts, Hacker looks elsewhere for narrative models. She asks whether Rich has also "written about someone living with it / through it / past it" (218). One entry and two years later, she answers the question, mentioning Rich's "From Corralitos under Rolls of Clouds" (in *Atlas of the Difficult World* [1991]) and Alicia Ostriker's "Mastectomy Poems" (in *The Crack in Everything* [1996]). The latter poem, notes Hacker, who is responsible for its publication, refuses the "victim" role while "chronicling her fear and loss" (1999, 218). Rich's poem, on the other hand, is not about cancer. But, she adds, it is about the "speciousness of a division between 'victims' and 'survivors,' since we are both at once" (218). This comment, I would like to suggest, is at the heart of Hacker's reflections on her disease. Rejecting the trite cliché that sees cancer as a crucial rite of initiation into a better life and the cancer survivor as a "sagacious messenger whose purpose is to remind everyone of the preciousness and the precariousness of life" (Stacey 1997, 244), Hacker's work asks more fundamental questions about what it means to "survive" and how we do so.

Before looking more closely at these questions, however, I would like to make one final point about Hacker's attempt to revise prevalent narrative forms. By insisting on her dissatisfaction with existing models and on her self-conscious attempts to revise them, my protestations to the contrary, I have been representing her as an insightful artist and as a "sagacious messenger" of a literary sort. Yet coexisting with it are mechanisms that, I have suggested, disturb it. Thus, although the narrative form seems to resist a linear movement, it also depends on one. Although Hacker refuses a melodramatic mode, she nevertheless occasionally falls back into it. As readers, we are obliged not so much to choose between these modes or to praise the poet's adroitness in avoiding romantic pitfalls as to recognize the tensions in the lives of breast cancer patients that this dialogic and disjunctive narrative implies. This recognition does not entail following Arthur Frank's admonitions to listen to Hacker's chaos narrative without imposing logical coherence. Instead, it acknowledges both the absence of coherence and the underlying desire for it. Not surprisingly, this equivocal narrative posture and the conflicting impulses it upholds are equally characteristic of Hacker's self-presentation as "survivor." I will explore this issue in the next section by analyzing her ambivalent attempts

to compare her identity as a breast cancer survivor with those of survivors of political and historical catastrophes.

### **The specious division between victims and survivors**

Hacker begins to interrogate the distinction between victim and survivor before her diagnosis. In "Against Elegies," paying tribute to friends and acquaintances dead and dying from breast cancer, lung cancer, AIDS, and suicide, she recognizes how insignificant and meaningless individual deaths have become in a century where the banality of violent and catastrophic death has become so all pervasive: "But this was another century / in which we made death humanly obscene: / Soweto El Salvador Kurdistan / Armenia Shatila Baghdad Hanoi / Auschwitz" (Hacker 1994b, 14). The litany of place names that memorialize sites of twentieth-century near genocides substitutes for the dead themselves, far too numerous to be named and honored. The exponential increase in their numbers renders any posthumous recognition impossible. Whereas the singular and highly individual action of the heroic "partisan" can be celebrated, how can tribute be paid to the equally tragic but far more numerous and overwhelmingly banal death by "hunger, all-American / mass murders, small wars, / the old diseases and the new" (15)? The individual's demise disappears in the catastrophic event. Any meaning and significance is denied by an arbitrariness that negates individual action.

"Against Elegies" can but conclude with the disappearance of these deaths from metahistory: "At the end, Catherine will know what she knew, / and James will, and Melvin, / and I, in no one's stories, as we are" (Hacker 1994b, 15). Ending on the eternal present of the verb *to be* after shuttling between future and past tenses, the poem affirms what "August Journal" calls the "infinitesimal, infinite" (1994b, 95) of the moment against an irretrievable and incoherent historical narrative. The presence of one's existence cannot be trapped within a story any more than the present can be framed by events, future and past.

Before arriving at this apparently nihilistic conclusion, the poem tries unsuccessfully to suggest otherwise by mentioning how each life marks another and by making "everyone living a survivor / who will, or won't bear witness for the dead" (Hacker 1994b, 14). In the context of this poem, the "survivor" is the one who has not been directly touched by life-threatening diseases and manmade catastrophes. An external witness to these events, she has the moral responsibility to respond to and recall disasters. Separating the afflicted from the witnesses of affliction, Hacker uses cancer, as have many before, as a metaphor for death. She assumes

the disease implies "unknown but certain doom" (1999, 206). Her diagnosis teaches her otherwise: death is not certain, although it may well be arbitrary, having little to do with individual will and action. There is, of course, a possibility for collective political action that, by demanding better strategies for health care and prevention, gives rise to a new "war / cry . . . not 'Why me?' but 'No more / one-in-nine, one-in-three, rogue cells killing / women'" (1994b, 90). But this action should be distinguished from acknowledging those who are randomly afflicted. This acknowledgment includes interrogating the "speciousness of a division between 'victims' and 'survivors'" (1999, 218) and exploring one's place in collective history.

I would like to begin this interrogation by insisting that Hacker's use of *survivor* is informed by contemporary representations of the Holocaust and by their ramifications for narratives of historical change. In "Journal Entries," she identifies two ways of considering such narratives, namely "history-as-catastrophe" and history as "the daily graying and wearing of stone, the accumulation of mineral plaque in the pipes" (1999, 205). In both cases, the historical process is not about autonomous individual action that changes the course of events but rather about coping with the vicissitudes of life that remain beyond individual control. In these schemes, the opposition between victim and survivor disappears. Instead, these understandings imply identifying the different meanings of "survivor." In the first case, the survivor is she who outlives cataclysmic events, whereas in the second she simply and banally lives. There is another notion of historical survival—memory—that needs mentioning, for it becomes a way of insisting on individual and collective existence beyond death and disappearance. The final poem in the "Cancer Winter" sequence, "August Journal," confronts all three meanings. Exploring how they are played out, I will argue that Hacker's poem insists both on the desire to make sense of her experience by inscribing it in a historical narrative and on the impossibility of doing so.

In "August Journal," Hacker's meditation on her efforts to survive breast cancer is set against an extensive consideration of the historical survival of humanity, interweaving "intimations of [her] mortality" (1994b, 93) with reflections on the homeless in Paris and New York, the death of her 102-year-old neighbor, and the Holocaust. Recalling her recent brush with her "ephemeral flesh" (91), the poem begins by asking: "If I'm one of the victims, who survives? / If I'm—reach for it—a survivor, who / are the victims? The heroic dead, / the ones who died in despair, the ones who died in terror and despair / and having to be brave. I want the dull / workdays and nights of unexceptional / unmarked life, with



eyelashes and hair. / It is exceptional to die in bed / at ninety-eight, not having been gassed, shot, / wrung dry with dysentery, drowned at birth / in a basin for unwanted girls" (91).

Referring self-consciously to her own experience, Hacker tries, albeit with some discomfort, to undermine the distinction between victim and survivor. She refuses the simplistic designation of passive victim by insisting here on the "heroic" effort of "having to be brave" and, in the lines that follow, on how victims will "endure whatever they endure" (1994b, 92). As such, she establishes continuity between victimhood and survival, where the latter includes both outliving catastrophes and the unexceptional and dull fact of living. In a century that has made "death humanly obscene" (14), simply to live unmarked by banal manmade catastrophes is exceptional.

In the poem, Hacker's neighbor, Mme Mehling, whose 102-year-old life has been as "humdrum as the sparrows that she fed / on fine days" (1994b, 92), is such an exception. Although she has lived through two world wars, losing a fiancé in the first one, her four-decade routine of work at a creamery goes unperturbed. "Was it one hundred years of solitude," Hacker asks, adding with more lighthearted humor "or of spinstery sociability with cronies . . . ?" (92). An embodiment of the daily-graying-and-wearing-of-stone kind of history, Mme Mehling survives in the first two meanings of the word. So too, notes the poet with some irony, do some perpetrators of the Holocaust. The French police, officials, and guards involved in mass deportations "passed without a trace / to middle age, old age, to death in bed / (exceptional) perhaps, at ninety-eight, / perhaps having forgotten what they did" (95).

Hacker conjoins the traceless lives of middle-aged Holocaust perpetrators with their traceless memories. She thereby suggests that memory is a form of survival, one that does not seem available to Mme Mehling. The latter disappears in death, the lifetime accumulation of clothes and cooking utensils piled on the bin while the "century of life she had to lose / is lost, the century of memory / evaporated, a scent in the air" (1994b, 92). In this disappearance, Mme Mehling resembles the banally "unexceptional" who live and die anonymously. Such is the case of the homeless beggars outside supermarkets: "if one's gone," Hacker asks, "when will I know it?" (91). Such too is the case of Jewish children deported to death camps from France by the Vichy government. Although the poet knows the names of those responsible for their deaths, she knows "not the children's names" (94). Such is, finally, the case with Hacker herself: "I sit, tethered to a present tense / whose intimations of mortality

/ may ultimately make no difference / to anyone, except of course to me / and finally, to nobody at all" (93).

Hacker tries to resist the anonymity that history, of both the catastrophic and the daily-graying kinds, imposes on survivors. She proclaims that her life is inscribed in and marked by a larger geographic and historical web that will "bear witness" (1994b, 14) to her death as she does and will do to others'. Acknowledging how her life is "taint[ed]" (14) and her body "mark[ed]" (94) by her Jewish heritage and the tragedy of her people who "though . . . not [her] past, . . . are [her] past" (95), she invokes their deaths, trying to forestall their total disappearance and to uphold their collective survival.

Yet the complexity of testifying, signaled in the poem through allusions to linguistic barriers, renders this attempt difficult. Although Hacker has friends on two continents who will remember her, "some of [them]," she notes, "couldn't pronounce each other's names." Similarly, not only have the names of the Jewish children vanished, but the children might have been too young to "pronounce [their own] name" (1994b, 94).

Physiological barriers also prevent testifying. Referring again to the Holocaust, Hacker comments, "our songs became ash on the tongue, / . . . our tongues were ash" (1994b, 94). In the context of the gas chambers, Jewish tongues have been literally reduced to ash. In the aftermath of the gas chambers, tongues have figuratively become "ash" because of the difficult task of mourning and lamenting. It has, in short, become literally and figuratively impossible to testify and to lament. Yet even as Hacker describes this impossibility, she refuses to accept it. After this silencing, she asks, "can any Jew stay indoors with a book / and ruminate upon her own disease, present or past, absorbed, alone, aloof?" (94). She refuses what she calls her "solipsis[is]" (94) obsession with her own illness and suffering to think about others.

However appropriate this attempt to move beyond questions of Hacker's individual survival by identifying herself as Jewish and with Jews may be, it is nevertheless suggestive of a troubling desire to give her experience meaning by relating it to a larger political and historical narrative. Yet, as with testifying, "August Journal" repeatedly questions this appropriating comparison by highlighting the problematic ways in which arbitrary historical events are given meaning through narrative. First, the poem calls attention to problems with memory. As I suggested earlier when discussing Mme Mehling, it repeatedly implies that memory is unreliable. It also suggests that human inscriptions attempting to rectify this limitation are fallible. For example, in the course of the poem, Hacker

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contrasts her own faulty memory of an afternoon walk with a Normandy landscape, which bears no clear marks of its past history.

Second, the poem frequently positions the arbitrary passage of time in relation to the structuring and meaning imposed by narrative movement. In a long section toward the end, it juxtaposes revolutions in time with historical ones. It thus reveals how apparently random moments and changes assume significance when situated in a story. Referring to numerous pogroms from which her family fled, Hacker writes, "the season turned (as it would turn, again) / the flaming summer of a violent spring" (1994b, 93). Because it is difficult to distinguish here between a temporal shift and a sociopolitical one, it is impossible to know where the account of unrelated moments ends and the coherent and meaningful story begins. Subsequently, temporal movement is granted an even more particular and individual meaning when used to qualify, as in the title, the poet's breast cancer: "the night-without-a-morning of disease, / the afternoon of long, exceptional / life as summer modulates to fall, / the flame-erupted dusk of history" (95).

Appropriating and echoing the images of her family's and her people's encounter with historic catastrophe to speak of the chaos of being sick, Hacker wants to consider them together. Time, both individual and collective, is structured by a historical metanarrative. Yet, given how the poem invites an ambiguous reading of what moment it is, it nevertheless neither totally assimilates the individual experience to the historical narrative nor entirely refuses such an assimilation. As such, it both identifies the breast cancer patient's desire to make her experience meaningful by relating it to historical catastrophes and invokes the difficulty and indeed near impossibility of doing so. By remaining equivocal about the relation between the Jewish breast cancer survivor and those dead in the Holocaust, the poem adopts what Melissa Zeiger has called "an increasingly politicized, retroactive drama of identification and positioning" (1997, 163). Identifying as a Jew, as a breast cancer patient, and as a survivor all become self-consciously political acts, making identity itself necessarily unstable.

The articulation between the passage of time and narrative movement is also present in the references at the beginning and end of the poem to the late afternoon sun. As in the context of the changing seasons, the poem describes the warm and illuminating sunlight as a way of measuring time. Here, physical details are articulated in relation to the body that sees and experiences them. Unlike earlier moments in the poem, however, any inscription in historical metanarrative is resisted. The poem concludes instead by insisting on a corporeal presence that cannot be contained by the past and the future: "All I can know is the expanding moment, /

present, infinitesimal, infinite, / in which the late sun enters without comment / eight different sets of windows opposite" (Hacker 1994b, 95).

The enjambment between the first and second lines eternalizes the "expanding moment," whose endless but unspecific nature is contrasted with the more precise notion of time signaled by the entering sun. This contrast is heightened by the opposition between the poet and the sun. The former can affirm her knowledge through her writing, ever expanding like the moment, whereas the latter enters "without comment." Insisting on her expansion as well as on the unlimited present, the final lines of "August Journal" imply, as does "Against Elegies," that the poet is "in no one's stories" (Hacker 1994b, 15). This is true not only because, as in the prediagnosis poem, her suffering disappears in the larger movements of history but also because Hacker tries to tell a story without asserting closure. She can no more affirm that she is "cured" than she can suggest that she is dead. She can only appreciate her moment without framing it within a coherent historical or political story. The mere awareness of the sun in the window recalls the little and "humdrum" pleasures of bread and birds that punctuate Mme Mehling's existence before her "century of memory" disappears into garbage bags. In a clearly equivocal stance, then, "August Journal" insists on both an eternal present and a meta-historical narrative, both on surviving catastrophe and undergoing the "daily graying and wearing" down (1999, 205), on remembering the past and on the limits to this necessary task. In so doing, it plays out the different kinds of survivors mentioned earlier.

### **Scars on bodies, scars on paper**

Examining Hacker's postmastectomy poems and how they question a facile conception of "survivor," I have been focusing on how she explores ways of thinking about our individual and collective existence, our physical presence, and our historical interrelatedness. These explorations reiterate arguments she elaborates elsewhere. Writing about the work of some of her contemporaries, Hacker comments, "we are at once corporeal and historical beings, existing in our physicality and our narratives, with the two often at odds" (1996). In the final part of this article, I take my cue from this formulation and explore how the dual existence crystallizes around issues of poetic form specifically and writing generally. I will suggest that the tension between "corporeal and historical" beings is figured by a highly self-conscious awareness of the relation between writing and the body, an awareness that is most apparent in the recurrent references to scars.

Very reflective on her poetic art and very aware of modernist and postmodernist debates on the meaning of history and on the relation between poetry and politics, Hacker has argued that poetic form inscribes poetry into a necessarily political and historical network. When interrogated about her use of traditional prosody, she insists that “disjunctive and dialogic” (Ellis et al. 2000) struggles with form and appropriations of the canon produce a new poetry. This contention, she adds, “is most fruitfully and daringly employed by poets who exercise those forms with enough expertise to allow that improvisatory counterform to come into play” (Finch 1996, 24). As such, a revitalized form, such as the sonnet, the sestina, or the elegy, is marked by its fixed, canonical stature as well as by the individual innovations and deformations meted out by different readers and writers of poetry. Any formal transformation must be assessed in terms of both traditional poetic convention and individual rearticulations.

This historical and political perspective on a genre applies to the elegy. The title of the opening poem of *Winter Numbers*, “Against Elegies,” situates Hacker in the camp of modernist responses to the traditional genre. As Jahan Ramazani has written, modernist poets “reanimate the elegy not by slavishly adopting its conventions; instead they violate its norms and transgress its limits. They conjoin the elegiac with the anti-elegiac, at once appropriating and resisting the traditional psychology, structure, and imagery of the genre. The apparently oxymoronic term ‘modern elegy’ suggests both the negation of received codes (‘modern’) and their perpetuation (‘elegy’)” (Ramazani 1994, 2). In his discussions of these formal transformations, Ramazani focuses on how a modernist poetics refuses the propensity of the genre “to translate grief into consolation” (3), thereby diminishing its ties with “love poetry and encomium” (5). A similar preoccupation is at stake, I believe, in Hacker’s rejection of the division between victim and survivor that characterizes the elegy. For, in so doing, she also refuses to heroize the dead and to placate the living. Instead, her revised elegy becomes a way of considering how we live both in the present and in history and not simply between the “lost past and the questionable future” (1999, 223–24).

Hacker’s ambivalent antielegiac stance is reiterated in “August Journal” and “Scars on Paper,” composed in the aftermath of her experience with disease. Although, as Zeiger has argued, Hacker refuses “a self-elegizing impulse and a premature leave-taking” (1997, 165), she nevertheless produces elegies in both poems. As mentioned above, ostensibly about her own survival of breast cancer, “August Journal” invokes the death of the exceptionally banal Mme Mehling and of the banally exceptional Jewish victims of the Vichy government. Whereas the juxtaposition of the two

kinds of death forces us to acknowledge that the elegies in question are self-consciously critical antielegies, they nevertheless perpetuate the existence and indeed the very necessity of the genre.

Similar gestures toward the negation and maintenance of the elegiac are at stake in "Scars on Paper." Here too the poet contrasts her own precarious survivor status with other deaths. She invokes, among others, a woman who "might have been . . . [a] friend" (Hacker 2000, 16), now dead of cancer of the brain. In the poem, texts recall this person's existence: not only does the poet reflect on a photograph, she also learns about the recent death through an obituary in the *Nation*. As if to insist on this textual importance, the poem twice repeats "Persistently on paper we exist" (15). It would be easy to infer from such patterns that we are being reminded how the elegy consoles by bringing the dead back to life in song and on paper. Yet, in the course of her meditation, the poet notes how "Words take the absent friend away again" (16). This verse becomes a self-conscious reminder of both the necessity and the very impossibility of the genre. As such, it recalls the literal and figurative disappearance of tongues in "Autumn Journal" that, I suggested, signals the impossible task of testifying. As in her earlier poem, here too, despite knowing that the elegiac may simply reiterate loss, Hacker continues to write as a remedy against forgetting and as a means of living.

Commenting on Hacker's antielegies, Zeiger has insisted on the crucial importance of writing as a mode of individual existence and collective survival. "Rooted in writing, and yet not saved by it in any physical or metaphysical sense, the poet still finds in poetry a way of sustaining herself as a witness to the absent presence of the dead in an 'interleaved' community of mourning" (1997, 164). I would like to end my discussion of Marilyn Hacker's breast cancer poems by suggesting that this salutary possibility of writing is also directly related to the body and sexuality. For the materiality of both physical and textual experiences articulates the means to exist outside narrative closure. "Sex is a meditation; writing is a meditation," Hacker observes in her "Journal Entries," drawing a parallel between the two activities. She notes how they both act against impending doom: "it is that place where, as long as it lasts, there is nothing other than itself, what I'm doing in that moment: I'm not obsessing on the lost past and questionable future" (1999, 223-24). In a number of her poems, these sexual and textual activities figure presence and the present. By rejecting closure, they hold back the threat of death. In "Year's End," dedicated to the memory of Audre Lorde and Sonny Wainwright, both recently dead of breast cancer, for instance, the awareness of death and mortality is ward off by "amazing / bodily music" (1994b, 76). In

"Cancer Winter," memories of past kisses and promises of future ones curtail the overwhelming sense of the body's mortality, whereas in "Scars on Paper," it is "sex / in the present tense" (17) that does so.

But the body is not only figured as a present and corporeal existence. Bearing the marks of the past, it is also the embodiment of one's "historical being" (Hacker 1996). To the recurrent images of the physical vitality of the body responds an equally prevalent sequence where the body is a text on which history is inscribed. I have already referred to relevant passages in "Against Elegies" and "August Journal" that insist on these "taint[ings]" (1994b, 14) and these body "mark[ings]" (94). I recall them here to highlight the semantic resonance of the terms: they refer both to the body and to the written text. This polysemy appears elsewhere in Hacker's poems. In "Cancer Winter," as Zeiger has demonstrated, the "odd and even numbers in the street" mentioned in the first sonnet of the sequence allude not just to the Ohio streets she views from her scene of writing but also "to the book's others, medically referential numbers (stages of treatment, statistics about the dead), and finally, in their arrangement, to the braiding of the sonnets in the sequence" (1997, 165). To Zeiger's enumeration we should also add that in discussions of poetry numbers refer to metrical patterns and even verse itself, a point that reminds us how "Cancer Winter" has a "disjunctive and dialogic" (Ellis et al. 2000) relation with the iambic pentameter of the traditional sonnet. Thus, when the final sonnet of the series notes how "These numbers do not sing / your requiems, your elegies" (Hacker 1994b, 90), it reflects as much on the body count as on the metrical feet, as much on the limits of medical statistics as on that of the verses themselves.

In the same poem, Hacker compares the manner in which the surgeon takes out the staples in a standard postsurgical procedure to "as on a revised manuscript / radically rewritten" (1994b, 82). Similarly, describing her state in the aftermath of her operation, she writes, "I'm incomplete / as my abbreviated chest" (79). "Abbreviated" in the second line refers back to the grammatical abbreviation in the first one, while the enjambment renders the verses as "incomplete" as herself.

In Hacker's poems, this body-as-text metaphor assumes its fullest potential in relation to the scar she bears as an aftermath to mastectomy. A literal mark on her body, the scar also embodies her personal history, recalling body marks inscribed by manmade historical catastrophes. In "Cancer Winter," Hacker compares it to the "blunt tattoo" worn by Jews "if they survived, oceans away" (1994b, 85), whereas in "Scars on Paper" she juxtaposes her scar to those worn by survivors of civil wars in Central America (2000, 18). In so doing, however, she is careful not to assimilate

her disease with political oppression. Indeed, elsewhere she distinguishes between the two kinds of scars. In "Cancer Winter," she asks, "Should I tattoo my scar? What would it say?" (1994b, 85).

By authoring her own body-text, she refigures herself as a survivor who lives and loves in the present. For the answer to her question is: "It could say 'K. J.'s Truck Stop' in plain Eng- / lish, highlighted with a nipple ring" (Hacker 1994b, 87). Here, too, the prosody forces us to make connections between the poet's and the poem's body. The hyphenated word straddling the enjambment insists that "Eng- / lish" is no plainer than her tattooed scar is unnoticeable, that the body is no less for being partially amputated than the word is.

This refiguration also insists that externally inflicted marks cannot be worn in silence. "Scars on Paper" repeats a variant of the verse "With, or despite our scars, we stay alive" twice (2000, 18). More significantly, in the same poem, Hacker adds "I'm enrolled / by mine in ranks where I'm 'being brave' / if I take off my shirt in a hot crowd / sunbathing, or demonstrating for Dyke Parade" (17-18). Relying on military imagery and displaying her scars in public, she casts herself as another proud "warrior woman" (1994b, 76). But the poet is ambivalent about this gesture. The inverted commas signal her dissatisfaction in describing her action as "bravery." As such she refuses to partake in prevailing ideology that makes the patient responsible for outliving her disease (Stacey 1997, 201-37). She does not castigate those women, dead or otherwise, who cannot choose to be brave any more than she assimilates her scars to those worn by political refugees.

The recurrent references to scars hark back to Hacker's discovery, in the wake of her breast cancer detection, that her earlier writings had been an "affront" to those cancer patients "who are alive with their scars" (1999, 210). This discovery, I mentioned, precipitated the search for another metaphor, a search that may well have ended with these scars. At once coherent and disruptive, "corporeal and historical," bodies and narratives, scars recall our dual existence. By the same token, as "Scars on Paper," the poem whose title invokes a self-conscious confrontation of these issues, suggests, they also recall the dual nature of writing itself: at once a presence and a constant reminder of the absence that must be represented. These scars then are not mere metaphors. They are self-referential markers of the endless present/presence of the poetic process, of our "physicality and our narrative," and ultimately of the odd relation between "corporeal and historical" existence.

By insisting on the present/presence of writing and of the body, Hacker offers another elegy that neither simply uses the dead nor consoles the living



through a facile inscription in historical metanarrative. By undermining the distinction between victim and survivor, she invites new ways of thinking of our historical existence. By resisting the linear model of illness followed either by death or by cure and remission, Hacker gesticulates toward another understanding of the trauma of illness. Shuttling between the present and history, between the corporeal and the historical, between history-as-catastrophe and history-as-gradual-wearing-down, Hacker's poetry acknowledges both human resilience and the chaos that engulfs it, both the unrepresentable depths of experience and the meanings ascribed to it. Rather than opting for an either-or solution to our complex and conflicted lives, her poetry holds her, as it does her reader, in suspension, situated at once in the present and in history, for ourselves and for others.

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## "A Grim Fantasy": Remaking American History in Octavia Butler's *Kindred*

Octavia Butler's novel *Kindred* ([1979] 1988) begins at the end of an adventure that has left her protagonist, the aspiring young African-American writer Dana, trapped in a wall of her own house—not boarded inside the wall, not even confined, really, but standing with her arm somehow fused into the actual studs and sheetrock of the wall. To a certain extent, Dana's confusion with this situation parallels that of the reader who opens *Kindred* expecting to read a historical novel of slave life only to find herself confronted with images that seem more appropriate to science fiction: How did Dana get there? How is this even possible? These personal and seemingly impossible questions become those of every class of people who find themselves, as Dana does, not simply on the wrong side of history but trapped and maimed by a history stranger and crueler than they have been taught to imagine.

In this essay, I examine Butler's novel as a kind of memory machine that answers these seemingly impossible questions by using science fiction devices to re-present African-American women's histories. One of the few prominent black authors in science fiction, Butler is often lauded for her depictions of future worlds where advanced technologies quite literally mediate race and gender.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, her work is increasingly recognized as participating in African-American traditions of historical fiction.<sup>2</sup> In particular, scholars identify *Kindred* as an important precursor to the neo-slave narratives created by authors such as Toni Morrison and Sherley Anne Williams in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>3</sup> Although these scholars always acknowledge Butler's primary allegiance to science fiction, they rarely pursue the impact this might have on her historical fiction. Yet such a discussion seems fruitful. If one of the goals of African-American historical fiction is to interrogate how "race," "gender," and even "history"

<sup>1</sup> See Sargent 1975; Friend 1982; and Armitt 1996.

<sup>2</sup> See Govan 1986 and McKible 1994.

<sup>3</sup> See esp. Beaulieu 1999 and Rushdy 1999.



emerge through interlocking sets of representations, then it would seem imperative to examine how authors who work in multiple genres might bring the representational strategies of those genres to bear on individual texts. To this end, in the following pages I will show how Butler participates in Afro-feminist projects to interrogate the relationship between historical memory and commercial culture by appropriating and adapting the commercial form of science fiction itself.

Published in 1979, *Kindred* emerged at the end of two decades of intense debate over the representation of African-American history. Spurred on by the grassroots work of civil rights, feminist, and new left activists in the 1960s, scholars in the U.S. academy "began to appreciate how 'history' was made not solely by the imperial powers of a nation but also by those without any discernable institutional power" (Rushdy 1999, 4). This led to certain changes in the production of scholarly and official histories as academics pursued research projects geared to acknowledge "America" as the dynamic product of complex negotiations between people of diverse races, classes, and genders. In particular, with the establishment of a black power intellectual presence in the academy, the study of American history also became the study of African-American history, and new historical sources—especially slave testimonials and narratives—provided the foundation for more inclusive models of memory.

Of course, official modes of memory were not the only—or even the primary—ones under scrutiny at this cultural moment. The 1960s and 1970s saw the dawn of a new commercial culture, marked especially by the rapid proliferation of a national (and even global) mass media.<sup>4</sup> As African Americans began entering media-related fields in significant numbers (and as black market shares grew and black intellectuals turned their critical gazes on the mass media), commercial institutions found themselves scrambling to adjust. The complex results of this adjustment were perhaps most evident in the newest and most rapidly spreading of these institutions: television. While stereotypical black advertising figures such as Aunt Jemima and Uncle Ben continued to haunt the airwaves throughout the 1970s, these stock characters were countered by a new kind of commercial advertisement that drew on the language of civil rights and black power movements. For instance, in its award-winning 1971 "Buy the world a Coke" campaign, Coca-Cola offered the American public a

<sup>4</sup> For general discussions of this proliferation and its impact on American culture, see Leiss, Kline, and Jhally 1986 and Jamison 1991. For a more specific discussion of how the new commercial culture affected people of color, see Hogue 1996.

utopian vision of racial equality through its depiction of well-groomed, racially diverse adolescents earnestly telling viewers that they'd "like to buy the world a Coke / To keep it company" (Rutherford 1994, 48). Meanwhile, McDonald's paid tribute to black women juggling work with marriage and motherhood by encouraging them to "take a little break today at McDonald's" with their families (Kern-Foxworth 1994, 163). Such images offered the public very specific ways of understanding and remembering American history. By emphasizing the egalitarian nature of contemporary race relations, they implicitly placed the struggle for equality in a past that seemed to bear little or no direct relation to the present. Furthermore, by asking viewers to understand this seemingly clean break with the past as a product of corporate benevolence, such images implicitly equated social and political equality with equality in the realm of consumption itself. Indeed, following cultural theorists extending back to Theodor Adorno, we might better understand this mode of remembering as a process of forgetting by which viewers elide their desires with those of the corporation and, in doing so, alienate themselves from the historical events that initially informed those desires.<sup>5</sup>

Elsewhere, however, television seemed to respond to emergent demands for more nuanced representations of American history in diametrically opposed ways. In particular, the 1977 premiere of *Roots* (the made-for-television miniseries based on Alex Haley's novel [1976] by the same name) marked a turning point in commercial culture. Watched by more than 130 million viewers, *Roots* was perhaps the first truly public acknowledgment that America was founded largely on the labor of enslaved peoples (Beaulieu 1999, 145). Rather than simply replacing the bad old past with a shiny new future in which all races are equal under the sign of consumption, *Roots* insisted on remembering the American past as an era in which those futures were created through the consumption of black labor. As such, it appeared to perform the same kind of historical revision in the mass media that new left and black power intellectuals were enacting in the academy.

Although commercial modes of memory engaged with their official counterparts in complex and seemingly contradictory ways, the two modes remained bound together by their masculinist approaches to history. As late as 1981, Angela Davis noted that "those of us who have anxiously awaited a serious study of the Black woman during slavery remain, so far,

<sup>5</sup> See esp. Adorno and Horkheimer (1947) 1994. Later theorists who follow up on these insights in terms of raced and gendered histories include Greene 1996 and Hogue 1996.

disappointed" (quoted in Beaulieu 1999, 6).<sup>6</sup> Other African-American feminists expressed a similar disappointment with representations of black women in the commercial realm. For instance, as Elizabeth Ann Beaulieu notes in her analysis of *Roots*, Haley (and the TV producers responsible for the miniseries) closely followed the patterns established in slave narratives written by men such as Frederick Douglass; as such, *Roots* focuses primarily on its protagonist, Kunta Kinte, as a rugged "loner . . . determined to save himself, and willing to compromise with his fellow captives only if it means securing his own freedom" (Beaulieu 1999, 146). Women, when depicted at any length, are either reduced to their biological function as child-bearers or presented in "the stock conventions of the suffering enslaved woman" (1999, 147) who inspires the heroic black man to action (Hogue 1996, 13; Rushdy 1999, 3). Similar if more truncated masculinist impulses informed advertising as well. For instance, the young working mother in the aforementioned McDonald's commercial is also reduced to the role of the suffering woman, a victim of stress and overwork who, like her counterparts in *Roots*, inspires others (here, the benevolent corporation) to social action.

Perhaps not surprisingly, this time period marked the emergence of yet another mode of memory—the African-American woman's neo-slave narrative. Authors including Gayl Jones, Sherley Anne Williams, and Toni Morrison used this form—an updated interpretation of the nineteenth-century slave narrative—to imaginatively re-present African-American history in a form that privileged firsthand African-American perspectives over their white counterparts. More specifically, these authors addressed African-American *women's* histories by following nineteenth-century authors such as Harriet Jacobs, shifting emphasis from the lone male hero to the female heroine enmeshed in networks of communal ties, and from literacy and public identity to family and personal self-worth (Foster 1994, xxx; Beaulieu 1999, 13–14). Writers also used the neo-slave narrative to comment on the historical relationship between black women and commercial culture. As Susan Willis argues, tragic characters such as Toni Morrison's Pecola from *The Bluest Eye* and Hagar from *Song of Solomon* are "sublime manifestations" of the contradiction between commercial representations of equality through consumption and the "reality that translation into the dominant white model is impossible for marginalized people" (1991, 114). By insisting on and exploring the gaps between public fantasy and personal history

<sup>6</sup> As Ann duCille (1996) notes, although writers such as Toni Cade Bambara and Jeanne Noble published books on black women's history in the 1970s, the academy typically lauded white scholars such as Gerda Lerner as the primary pioneers in this field

in their fiction, such authors participated in longstanding, time-honored critical traditions of skepticism about (and even antagonism toward) the culture industries as perpetrators of—as Adorno puts it—“enlightenment as mass deception” (120).

Much like other Afro-feminist writers, Octavia Butler has expressed explicit concern with masculinist narratives of African-American history. In regard to *Kindred*, she comments:

When I got into college . . . the Black Power Movement was really underway with the young people, and I heard some remarks from a young man who was the same age I was but who had apparently never made the connection with what his parents did to keep him alive. . . . He said, “I’d like to kill all these old people who have been holding us back for so long. But I can’t because I’d have to start with my own parents.”. . . That was actually the germ of the idea for *Kindred* ([1979] 1988). I’ve carried that comment with me for thirty years. He felt so strongly ashamed of what the older generation had to do, without really putting it into the context of being necessary not only for their lives but his as well. (Rowell 1996, 51)

As Butler suggests here, one of the goals of *Kindred* is to re-present historical memory in a way that acknowledges the impact of slavery not just on isolated individuals but on entire families and networks of kin. Indeed, she goes on to specifically critique the masculinist figure of the heroic loner, noting that although she began the novel with a male protagonist she had to switch his sex because “I couldn’t realistically keep him alive. So many things that he did would have been likely to get him killed. He wouldn’t even have time to learn the rules [of antebellum life] . . . before he was killed for not knowing them” (Rowell 1996, 51). For Butler, then, the fantasy of the ruggedly individualistic hero—especially when that hero is black and subject to the laws of American slavery—is an impossible one, even in the realm of speculative fiction.<sup>7</sup>

Butler begins to depart from other neo-slave narrative authors, however, in her relationship to commercial culture; after all, her literary rep-

<sup>7</sup> Although a full examination of this issue is beyond the scope of the present essay, it is important to note that elsewhere in *Kindred*, Butler interrogates the raced implications of figures such as the heroic, rugged loner through her depiction of Kevin, Dana’s white husband. Unlike the black male protagonist whom Butler initially intended to depict, Kevin is, at least to a certain extent, able to assume this role and survive the antebellum South. In doing so, however, he relegates himself to the position of a relatively minor player in history.



utation is derived primarily from her participation in one increasingly prominent part of commercial culture: science fiction. While this seems to set her apart from other neo-slave narrative authors in some ways, it does align her with another African-American literary tradition. Sheree Thomas notes that authors extending back to Ralph Ellison and W. E. B. DuBois have long used science fiction tropes, including alternate worlds, invisibility, and the "encounter with the alien other," to estrange readers from dominant understandings of American history and to re-present "the impact and influence of black life on society" (2000, xii). In the 1960s and 1970s, black writers, including Samuel Delany and Butler, joined their white feminist counterparts in publishing full-scale science fiction stories and novels. For these authors, science fiction provided more than just a way to re-present history; it allowed them to explore how such revisions might lead to new and more egalitarian futures as well. As Sarah Lefanu puts it, "unlike other forms of genre writing, such as detective stories and romance, which demand the reinstatement of order and can thus be described as 'closed' texts, science fiction is by its nature interrogative, open. Feminism questions a given order in political terms, while science fiction questions it in imaginative terms" (1988, 100).<sup>8</sup> Taken together, then, both the tropes and the form of science fiction provide Butler with the tools to build the kind of memory machine adequate to the needs of Afro-feminist historical revision.

And, indeed, Butler does just that with her self-described "grim fantasy," *Kindred*.<sup>9</sup> The novel follows the story of Dana, a young black woman struggling to make her name as an author in present-day California. Mysteriously pulled through space and time to antebellum Maryland, Dana comes face to face with her slave heritage on the Weylin plantation and discovers that she must arrange the rape of a free black woman by the slaveowner Rufus Weylin in order to ensure her own birth. Taken as a slave herself, Dana seems torn between two equal—and equally bleak—options: either she submits to Rufus's—and history's—demands and thus preserves her family line or she resists these demands and runs the risk of never being born herself. To resolve this temporal paradox, Dana—and, by extension, Butler's readers—must learn to understand history itself as a process of narrative production.

Throughout the first half of *Kindred*, Butler specifically uses the science fiction device of time travel to problematize the production of historical

<sup>8</sup> For similar arguments launched by feminist science fiction authors themselves, see Sargent 1975.

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Crossley 1988.

memory, especially in its commercialized form. As Damien Broderick notes, such devices allow authors to show how "no element of our own reality can be counted upon automatically to remain as a given, although ideological analysis may readily locate, precisely here, representations of those features rendered invisible by power and usage even as they dictate our lives" (1995, 26). Such analysis clearly pervades the early sections of Butler's novel. For instance, in her first trip to the past, Dana finds herself suddenly transported to a river in the Maryland woods of 1819, where she saves a young Rufus from drowning. When Rufus's gun-wielding father appears, she returns to her own world in an equally sudden manner. The whole encounter seems highly surreal to Dana, "like something I saw on television . . . something I got second-hand" (17). By resorting to the prosaic metaphor of watching television, Dana distances herself from the disturbing possibility that the past might be something that quite literally touches her. Almost immediately, then, Butler shows how commercial modes of memory alienate individuals from history in potentially dangerous ways.

Butler also uses time travel to expose the masculinist bias inherent in commercial modes of memory. On her second trip to antebellum Maryland, Dana stumbles upon a group of white patrollers beating a black slave for sneaking off the plantation to visit his free wife and child:

I could literally smell his sweat, hear every ragged breath, every cry, every cut of the whip. I could see his body jerking, convulsing, straining against the rope as his screaming went on and on. My stomach heaved, and I had to force myself to stay where I was and keep quiet. Why didn't they stop! . . . I had seen people beaten on television and in the movies. I had seen the too-red blood substitute streaked across their back and heard their well-rehearsed screams. But I hadn't lain nearby and smelled their sweat or heard them pleading and praying, shamed before their families and themselves. I was probably less prepared for the reality than the child crying not far from me. In fact, she and I were reacting very much alike. My face too was wet with tears. (36)

This passage dramatizes precisely the kind of criticism other black women writers of the 1970s and 1980s leveled at commercial television shows like *Roots* and *The Civil War*. While such programs might prepare Dana for certain aspects of history—the dramatic struggle of the runaway slave, for instance—they do little or nothing to prepare her for the impact these actions might have on the families of the heroic individual so often central to those same programs.

Elsewhere, Butler extends her critique of the masculinist bias in commercial modes of memory to their official or scholarly counterparts. Once she realizes that she will continue to travel through time until she ensures that Rufus grows up to initiate her family line, Dana vows to make the best of her situation by teaching the slave children around her to read and write—and to run for freedom as soon as they can (98). Thus, Dana tries to make sense of her new world by adopting the “literacy-identity-freedom” paradigm typically associated with the male-oriented slave narratives produced by nineteenth-century authors such as Frederick Douglass and reproduced later by twentieth-century writers such as Alex Haley. Within this paradigm, the enslaved person’s acquisition of language skills is the first—and most significant—step toward the acquisition of both psychological and physical freedom; other identifying characteristics are usually downplayed or even erased.<sup>10</sup>

Like other Afro-feminist critics, Butler suggests that while this paradigm is an important part of African-American history, it cannot adequately account for the gendered dimensions of that history. Again, she specifically uses time travel to underscore this point. On catching Dana and one of her pupils in the cookhouse with some books, Rufus’s infuriated father beats Dana mercilessly. As she falls unconscious and feels herself pulled back to California, the shocked Dana can only protest that “this wasn’t supposed to happen. . . . No white had [ever] come into the cookhouse before” (106). On returning to antebellum Maryland several weeks later, Dana is further horrified when she learns that her disappearance prompted the confused and enraged Weylin to punish her fellow slaves by selling some of their family members away from the plantation. Here, then, the partial nature of masculinist narrative structures leads Dana to misread history and her relationship to it in two ways. First, of course, she fails to anticipate Weylin’s appearance in the cookhouse because she perceives the master-slave relationship as simply raced rather than raced *and* gendered. In other words, by forgetting that the cookhouse is a both black and feminine space, Dana also forgets that it is subject to masculine surveillance and penetration. Second, these narrative structures lead Dana to understand herself as a lone individual battling the abstract forces of history rather than as someone enmeshed in familial and communal networks. Thus, she fails to anticipate that her actions might have consequences for

<sup>10</sup> For general discussions of the “literacy-identity-freedom” paradigm in nineteenth-century slave narratives, see Olney 1985, Gates 1987; and Foster 1994. For discussions of how this paradigm was specifically central to male authors, see Twagillimana 1997; Beaulieu 1999; and Rushdy 1999.

those around her—consequences that her travel through time underscores with startling clarity.

The cookhouse scene marks a turning point in *Kindred* as Dana begins to search for a mode of historical memory more appropriate to the experiences of African-American women. Significantly, Butler's use of science fiction devices also begins to shift at this point. As Marleen Barr notes, in science fiction "the alien other" typically signifies a certain anxiety about the raced and/or gendered other. However, women writers often appropriate this device to address their own political concerns: "Women—especially black women—who are alien to patriarchal society, alter fiction's depiction of the alien. . . . In opposition to science fiction stereotypes about vanquishing aliens, [these writers' characters] join with or are assisted by the aliens they could be expected to view as epitomizing the very opposite of humanness. These female characters, who are themselves the Other, do not oppose the Other" (1993, 98–99). More specifically, if feminist characters ally themselves with the alien other, it is precisely because this other "struggles to declare and create the truth" of marginalized people's lives outside those ordained by dominant modes of historical memory (99).

The shift to new modes of memory and new relations to the alien other begins almost immediately after the cookhouse scene. Upon her return to California, Dana resolutely reads and then purges her home of "everything . . . that was even distantly related to the subject [of slavery]. . . . [Their] versions of happy darkies in tender loving bondage were more than I could stand" (116). Simultaneously, she immerses herself in other, distinctly non-American stories of race relations and cultural power. Poring through testimonials from Nazi concentration camp survivors, Dana realizes that her experience of history is not unique, that "the Germans had been trying to do in only a few years what the Americans had worked at for nearly two hundred" (117). If Jewish Holocaust stories begin to provide Dana with a new framework for understanding African-American history, it is because they are, ultimately, alien to that experience. Outside the constraints of dominant American modes of memory, they can "declare and create the truth" of both past and present-day power relations.

Elsewhere, Butler specifically uses the encounter with the alien other to carry out the Afro-feminist project of debunking cultural stereotypes of black women as happy mammies or long-suffering victims. Early in *Kindred* Dana dismisses Sarah the house manager as the stereotypical mammy who remains loyal to her white owners—even when they sell her eldest children off the plantation—because these same owners have

deigned to give her a nominal position of power over the other slaves. On her next trip to antebellum Maryland, however, Dana recognizes Sarah as a "frightened powerless woman who had already lost all she could stand to lose" (145), one who plays the part of the mammy out of love for her remaining children and fear that, if she does not, they *will* be taken from her. This insight forces Dana to reconsider her similarities to Sarah. Previously, of course, Dana assumed that her mixed feelings about Rufus were "something new, something that didn't even have a name" (29). Now, however, she begins to see that this seemingly unique relationship parallels that of all the blacks and whites on the Weylin plantation—in other words, that her personal experience is not alien to, but instead part and parcel of, the American social experience as whole.

Finally, Butler uses the revised encounter with the alien other to show how contemporary black women like Dana might learn to reassess their own relations to history. Initially, this is a difficult task for Dana because there are few (if any) cultural narratives available to help her articulate this. Indeed, she only does so with the help of Carrie, the young house slave triply othered from American history by virtue of her race, gender, and the fact that, as a mute, she seems to be left outside of language itself. After Dana earns the scorn of the other plantation slaves for helping Rufus rape Alice, she tries to make sense of the situation by positioning herself as the long-suffering victim of fate, telling Carrie: "I can see why there are those here who think I'm more white than black" (224). Carrie vehemently negates this claim, wiping her fingers on Dana's face and then showing Dana both sides of her hand—an action that Dana does not understand until Carrie's husband explains that "she means it don't come off, Dana . . . the black. The devil with people who say you're anything but what you are" (224). In this scene, Carrie silently but powerfully insists on the importance of understanding oneself outside reductive modes of historical memory. As a black woman trying to survive slavery, Dana is more than a traitor to her race or a victim of fate. Instead, as Carrie suggests, Dana's rich and complex identity as a black woman "don't come off" just because she has had to make hard choices that are themselves neither wholly black nor white; instead, that identity is informed by those choices. Here, then, Carrie asks Dana to acknowledge that she, too, is the alien other of history.

As Mae G. Henderson argues in her study of contemporary Afro-feminist authors, black women's literature is "generated less by neurotic anxiety or dis-ease than by an emancipatory impulse which engages both hegemonic and ambiguously (non)hegemonic discourse" (1989, 37). For Butler, truly emancipatory engagements with—and revisions of—racist

and sexist discursive practices depend on black women recognizing themselves as the alien other of those practices. And indeed, it is precisely after Carrie's "lesson" that Dana finally gains control over herself and her world(s). On her final trip to Maryland (which, significantly enough, occurs on July 4, 1976) Dana learns that Alice has finally borne the daughter who will initiate Dana's family line. Meanwhile, however, Alice has committed suicide and Rufus is on the verge of doing the same. Dana prevents Rufus from taking his own life, but the desperate man repays the favor by trying to force her into one last hard compromise, promising to free and protect his and Alice's children if Dana will stay with him as his lover. The bargain seems perfectly reasonable to Rufus—after all, Dana and Alice are nearly identical doubles of one another, and black women are supposed to accede to the wishes of white men. Dana, however, refuses the role of the victim and, for the first time, imposes her own conditions on their already overdetermined relationship: "I could accept him as my ancestor, my younger brother, my friend, *but not as my master, and not as my lover*" (260; my italics). When Rufus refuses these conditions and attempts to rape her, Dana kills him and returns to her own world for good. Thus Dana's newfound sense of herself as the alien other leads to a quite literally emancipatory revision of history.

Although Dana's recognition of black women like herself as the alien others of American history seems to be an unproblematic triumph, the closing pages of *Kindred* encourage readers to meditate on the complex ways that this recognition might actually change women like Dana and their relations to history. Most immediately, Butler suggests that Dana does not escape her encounter with American history unscathed. In the seconds before he dies and Dana returns to present-day California, Rufus makes a final, desperate grab at Dana's arm. The result of this final action on the part of Rufus is the scene that begins *Kindred*: Dana comes to consciousness in the safety of her own home only to find that her arm has somehow fused itself to the wall of her bedroom. Although the scene is no less horrifying the second time around, the questions that it evokes (how did Dana get here? how is this even possible?) can be at least partially answered. By using science fiction devices such as time travel and the encounter with the alien other to engage with and reconstruct African-American women's history, Butler shows us that while Dana's literal situation may indeed seem like something out of a fantastic sci-fi scenario, metaphorically it makes perfect sense. As the alien other of American history, Dana is indeed deeply marked by—but at the same time an undisputed survivor of—that same history.

As such, Dana ultimately emerges as the author of a new mode of

historical memory—one that, perhaps not surprisingly, both engages with and writes beyond the ending of its more conventional masculinist counterparts. In the epilogue to *Kindred*, Dana decides to search for the remnants of the Weylin plantation in present-day Maryland. However, when she learns that the plantation has been destroyed, she realizes that she must turn to the very first form of historical memory that her experiences have taught her to distrust: commercial ones, including newspapers, magazines, and advertisements. Here, Dana finds at least part of the proof she needs in articles about a major plantation fire and advertisements for the sale of the Weylin slaves. While an earlier Dana might have accepted such narratives uncritically and despairingly, the older and wiser Dana of Butler's epilogue grieves for those who have been lost but manages to find hope in the midst of her grief:

All three of [their] sons were listed [in the auction advertisements], but Nigel and Carrie were not. Sarah was listed, but Joe and Hagar [Alice's children and Dana's ancestors] were not. . . . I thought about that, and put together as many pieces as I could. . . . [Rufus's mother] might have taken both children. Perhaps with Alice dead she had accepted them. They were her grandchildren, after all, the son and daughter of her only child. She might have cared for them. She might have held them as slaves. But even if she had, Hagar, at least, lived long enough for the fourteenth Amendment to free her. (263)

In this passage, Dana successfully pieces together an alternate family history based on her newfound understanding of historical representation itself as a kind of mutable structure informed by multiple sources: official historical "fact," its commercially oriented counterpart, and, of course, those personal and social experiences outside dominant modes of representation. Indeed, when another character suggests that she will "probably never know" exactly what happened to the Weylin plantation and its inhabitants, Dana touches her empty arm sleeve and replies "I know" (264). Dana's reply is appropriately ambiguous and overdetermined, both acknowledging the impossibility of complete narrative certainty while affirming her own relationship to history as an important source of cultural and individual memory. Thus Dana begins to generate her own representation of black women's experiences of America, one that is fueled by fact and fancy, grief and hope, and loss and love.

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## Considerations for a Psychoanalytic Theory of Gender Identity and Sexual Desire: The Case of Intersex

**M**ore than ten years ago Suzanne Kessler explored the medical management of intersexed individuals in *Signs* (1990). In this seminal article, Kessler argued that while medical protocols ostensibly rely on a host of biological indices for managing intersex, these indices (chromosomes, gonads, hormones, clitoris and penis size, reproductive capacity) are ultimately utilized through "cultural understandings of gender" (4).<sup>1</sup> Kessler noted that almost all published material on intersex convenes on surgical and hormonal management rather than on the legion of social protocols involved in directly influencing medical and social discourses that maintain the modern Western system of gender difference.<sup>2</sup>

Cheryl Chase (1998) estimates that one in every hundred births shows some morphological "anomaly," which is observable enough in one in every 2,000 births to initiate questions about a child's gender. Accounts differ as to the statistical frequency of intersexuality. Anne Fausto-Sterling (2000) suggests that 2 percent of live births, approximately 80,000 births per year, demonstrate some genital anomaly. Out of those, approximately 2,600 children a year are born with genitals that are not immediately recognizable as female or male. Milton Diamond estimates the incidence slightly lower, at 1.7 percent of the population (2000). Intersex is an umbrella term under which a variety of conditions are placed, including

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<sup>1</sup> The term *gender* is employed to reflect the contention that gender produces sex. See Delphy 1994; Hood-Williams 1996, and Bray and Colebrook 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Elsewhere (Hird 2000; Hird and Germon 2001) I have argued that intersex fundamentally challenges Western notions of dimorphic sexual difference.

androgen insensitivity syndrome, progestin-induced virilization, adrenal hyperplasia, and Klinefelter syndrome.<sup>3</sup>

Infants born with genitals that are neither clearly "female" nor "male" present a profound challenge to those cultures dependent on a two-gender system.<sup>4</sup> The alliance between bodies (female *or* male) and gender identity (girl *or* boy, woman *or* man) is taken for granted in Western society, and intersexed children are routinely surgically and hormonally gender re-assigned.<sup>5</sup> Kessler's analysis of intersex medical management in *Signs* has developed further (1998), as have a number of other feminist analyses.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, feminist interventions remain sparse compared with the tremendous interest shown by Western medicine and psychiatry since the 1950s. Literally hundreds of medical journal articles have deliberated on surgical and hormonal techniques for managing intersex, and the careers of pediatricians, endocrinologists, and surgeons have been built on the medical management of intersex.<sup>7</sup>

A minority of medical practitioners in North America and Britain are reconsidering the current medical management, and the often-heated debate about the appropriateness of surgery is well documented in both medical and intersex support group literature.<sup>8</sup> One issue to surface in this exchange is the lack of therapeutic intervention provided for intersex people and their families. Much evidence suggests that most of the minimal

<sup>3</sup> For a fuller explanation of intersex conditions, see <http://www.isna.org/faq.html>. Following Meyer-Bahlburg 1994, I use the term *intersex* to refer to both hormonal and non-hormonal categories of gender ambiguity.

<sup>4</sup> The current medical management of intersexed people is based on the work of John Money and his colleagues at Johns Hopkins Hospital in the 1950s (Money, Hampson, and Hampson 1955; Money and Ehrhardt 1972; Money 1994).

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps one of the most subtle and clear indications of the salience of the Western assumption of sexual difference is to be found in feminist analyses of genital mutilation. For instance, in "Shades of Othering: Reflections on Female Circumcision/Genital Mutilation" (1998), Stanlie James offers a critique of Alice Walker's *Warrior Marks*. Although James's analysis extends beyond the "Third World" to Western societies, genital mutilation here is confined to history—there is no recognition that clitoridectomies routinely take place in the United States, Canada, and Europe. Given that up to 2 percent of all children in the United States undergo genital mutilation each year without their consent, the absence of comparative analyses is telling. For a valuable critique of Western feminist approaches to sexual difference, see Oyewumi 1998.

<sup>6</sup> See Fausto-Sterling 1993, 1995, 2000; Chase 1994, 1998; Dreger 1998a, 1998b, 1999; Hird 2000, Hird and Germon 2001.

<sup>7</sup> See Hird 2000 for further discussion of the medical model for managing intersex.

<sup>8</sup> See Wilson and Reiner 1998 and Creighton and Minto 2001a, 2001b for useful summaries of the debate.

counseling available is provided by the consulting physician rather than a specifically trained psychotherapist.

Ten years ago, Kessler extended an invitation to expatiate the analysis of intersex beyond medical management to other areas, including clinical treatment.<sup>9</sup> The aim of this article is to speculate about the utility of developing a psychoanalytic approach to intersex. There are a number of issues that an intersexed patient might explore in a psychoanalytic setting: the development of trauma from repeated invasive surgeries, medical examinations (intersex children are often the subject of medical teaching and are routinely and repeatedly examined by groups of medical students), and the aftercare procedures (e.g., when surgically constructed vaginas require daily dilation with a prosthetic device, which is usually administered by parents until the child is old enough to self-administer); the development of trauma from the surgical alterations themselves (loss of erotic sensation); difficulties with parental and familial relationships (parents are routinely advised to withhold all information from their children about the intersex condition); ambivalent feelings regarding gender identity; and the parents' mourning for the loss of the fantasized perfect daughter or son.

By reviewing the existing psychoanalytic literature on intersex, I want to suggest that therapeutic emphasis tends to be placed on maintaining a stable gender identity, and psychoanalysts largely accept the designation of gender as defined by the medical team's determination. I will suggest that the preoccupation with defining the intersexed individual's "true" sex limits the degree to which intersex individuals are encouraged to explore other issues. I will further suggest that this emphasis on stable gender identity is linked with a valuation of heterosexuality over homosexuality. The emphasis of psychoanalytic theory on maturation presumes that gender identification that does not correspond to at-birth gender designation, and desire that is not opposite-gender directed, necessarily reflects developmental issues. There is consistent concern in the medical literature that an unstable gender identity will precipitate homosexual desire (see Zucker and Bradley 1995; Zucker et al. 1996; Slijper et al. 1998).

In order to explore these implications, I will draw on Freudian psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer theories—literatures often presented as mutually antagonistic. However, I will argue that all three literatures might be usefully yoked in an effort to explore the issue of gender identity among

<sup>9</sup> Elsewhere I have considered the implications of intersexuality for feminist theory (see Hird 2000).

intersexed individuals. Despite wide-ranging feminist critiques of psychoanalytic theory, feminist philosophical analyses continually return to psychoanalytic theory to theorize gender identity issues. Abigail Bray and Claire Colebrook (1998), for example, explore the popularity of the "post-psychoanalytic corporeal feminist theory" (40) of feminist scholars Rosi Braidotti, Teresa Brennan, Judith Butler, Rosalyn Diprose, and Luce Irigaray. Although critical of these scholars' investment in postpsychoanalytic feminist theory to "recreate new forms of subjectivity and knowledge" (39), Bray and Colebrook nevertheless acknowledge feminist theory's continued interest in psychoanalytically derived ideas.

For instance, Butler (1990, 1997) provides a thoughtful analysis of Freudian accounts of mourning to argue that, like all processes of identification, the acquisition of gender involves loss because the actual ideal object cannot be fully incorporated into the subject.<sup>10</sup> In a recent *Signs* article, Mary Hawkesworth (1997) criticizes Butler's work as making gender "too much a matter of the self" (668). As Hawkesworth writes, "the operation of gender in social, political, and economic institutions disappears as the psychodrama of the desiring self is played out" (668). In a pointed reply, Joan Scott (1997) questions Hawkesworth's opposition between the symbolic (psychic) and the material (institutional), pointing out that the social constructedness of gender "has to be denaturalized, and that requires understanding how it operates, not only as an abstract logical system, but as the ideology that constitutes subjective experiences of gender" (699). Therefore, in a direct reversal of Hawkesworth's argument, it is precisely through the desiring self that I hope to explore the "operation of gender in social, political, and economic institutions." By exploring how intersex infants are psychoanalytically managed, I follow Scott's directive to "focus on *how* in order to explain *why* gender works" (in Hawkesworth 1997, 654).

Following early Freudian psychoanalytic ideas, Judith Butler (1990, 1993, 1997), Rosi Braidotti (1991), Teresa Brennan (1993), Rosalyn Diprose (1994), and Wei Leng Kwok (2000) explore gender identification as an ambivalent, fragile process involving loss and trauma. Along with these feminist scholars, I will argue that Freudian psychoanalytic theory opens a potential space to consider the possibility of alternate readings of identification and desire. The idea of alternate readings is not limited within psychoanalytic theory to the psychic or interpersonal levels but to the politics of civilization. This political aspect of Freud's work—emphasized in *Civi-*

<sup>10</sup> Like Butler, I similarly argue that from a starting point of "polymorphous perversity" gender identification is gained at the price of restricted pleasures (Hird 2002).

*lization and Its Discontents* (1930), *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1961), and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1959), and taken up in Herbert Marcuse's *Eros and Civilization* (1962), Norman Brown's *Life against Death* (1959), and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1977)—seems to appeal to recent queer interpretations of psychoanalytic theory. For instance, Tim Dean (2000) makes the relationship between psychoanalytic and queer theories explicit: "without an appreciation of the unconscious, queer sexualities themselves become normalizing (paradoxical though that sounds), insofar as sexuality becomes wedded to identity" (6).

Through an analysis of various shifts in psychoanalytic thinking, I will argue that the political implications articulated in early Freudian psychoanalytic theory (and taken up by feminist and queer scholars) stand in stark contrast to the maturational theory found in therapeutic accounts with intersexed people. Rather than reject psychoanalytic theory wholesale, I hope to persuasively argue that seeds of alternate interpretations from *within* Freudian psychoanalytic theory might be harvested in efforts to challenge the assumption that stable gender identification is a prerequisite for bodily and relational pleasures.<sup>11</sup> Thus, rather than reproduce intersexuality as a psychological "problem," this deployment of psychoanalytic theory seeks a specifically sociopolitical analysis. My aim is modest—I am not advocating the liberation of all pleasures devoid of relational context—I am rather interested in considering the differential costs associated with achieving maturational goals as defined by modern society. If sexuality and "mature" relationships were not defined from a premise of stable gender identity, I will suggest one possible implication—that gender would no longer carry its current burden of excessive meaning, Foucault's "truth" of ourselves. This would render psychoanalysis obsolete—precisely Freud's "radical promise" (Dean 2000, 21).

### **From ambivalent identity to mature sexual aim**

How might an exploration of Freud's theory of gender identification open up possibilities of psychoanalytic intervention beyond a preoccupation with reinforcing a stable gender identity corresponding to the individual's "real" sex? Freud did not speak of gender identity (or identity) *per se*. Instead, Freud concentrated on the development of identification. In his

<sup>11</sup> My focus on intersexuality here reflects more than a philosophical interest in the limits of identity theories based on the presumption of stable gender. I am keenly concerned with the ethical implications of the medical "management" of intersexual people (see Hird 2000; Hird and Germon 2001).

early work, the emphasis is on the ambivalence, fragility, and trauma of identification—indeed, Freud seems to stress how easy it is to disrupt identification, as well as the myriad ways that identification might develop. Following Melanie Klein, Arnold Davidson, and others, I want to argue that Freud shifts from the ambivalence of identification to an emphasis on sexual aim, reproduction, and maturity. This shift will have serious consequences for the intersexed individual.

Although identification is never the subject of its own monograph, Freud makes constant reference to the subject and to the origin of selfhood. In *Totem and Taboo* (1913) Freud explicates the origin of culture and society, whose authority governs behavior. As Diana Fuss (1995) points out, key characteristics emerge concerning the character of identification. First, the sons' eventual identification with their father is *ambivalent*: they hate their father for the power he wields, while at the same time they love and admire him for this authority. Second, identification involves *violence*: the sons kill and eat their father. Extrapolating from the myth, we find that the love-object itself is not incorporated in its entirety, as the unconscious selects those elements that resonate most with the ego, so a certain degree of object "mutilation" is necessary as the ego takes from the object its autonomous identity. Third, the ritual meal serves to reinvoké and undergird the original identification, underscoring the temporality and fragility of all identifications.

Published in 1917, "Mourning and Melancholia" draws an association between the loss of a loved one and the symbolic loss of connection the infant experiences when it becomes an autonomous subject. When a loved object dies, the ego is required to completely give up its libidinal attachment to this object. This is experienced as so traumatic that the ego temporarily attempts to retain the attachment by denying the reality of the loss. The reality principle eventually renders this attempt unsustainable, and bit by bit the ego surrenders to the knowledge that the loss is permanent. Incorporation is largely accomplished at an unconscious level. Mourning involves a certain degree of resistance as "people never willingly abandon a libidinal position" (1917, 154). The incorporation never fully replaces the love-object, so the trauma of loss cannot be fully extirpated. The experience of direct object-cathexis differs from that of the pleasure experienced from identification in that the real object is inaccessible for identification, and the interpretation, or memory trace, as it were, of the object by the ego must suffice. Absolute replacement is impossible, and mourning accounts for the trauma of this limited assimilation. From the ego's perspective, there is no moral value attached to the object of love and

desire, that is, there are no "right" or "wrong" identifications. Finally, the motivating force of the ego toward stability effects a colonizing persistence.

Key aspects of Freud's discussion of the psychical processes of mourning might be taken up in our exploration of the origin of gender. Freud spoke alternatively of our inherent "bisexuality" and "polymorphous perversity," to emphasize our original undifferentiated identification and desire (1905a, 280).<sup>12</sup> Further, Freud's analysis repeatedly emphasizes that the undifferentiated infant enjoys a myriad of diffuse pleasures, which the subject learns to restrict according to societal censure. Melanie Klein acknowledges that "we know little about the structure of the early ego . . . the early ego largely lacks cohesion, and a tendency towards integration alternates with a tendency towards disintegration, a falling into bits" (Mitchell 1986, 179).<sup>13</sup> This "unfathomable" area, eager to experience pleasure in all of its polymorphous possibility, resists any attempts by the ego to narrow its sources. Klein was particularly aware of the anxiety, frustration, and sense of loss incurred with the process of identification. She states, "at a very early age children become acquainted with reality through the deprivations which it imposes on them. They try to defend themselves against it by repudiating it" (in Mitchell 1986, 59). One sign of the "achievement" of subjectivity is the child's demonstration of the "ability to sustain real deprivations" (59). Klein says further that the ego's "attempts to save the loved object, to repair and restore it, attempts which in the state of depression are coupled with despair . . . are determining factors for all sublimations and the whole of . . . ego development" (124). Freud was cognizant that the ego's struggle with the resistance of pleasures was unresolvable. In "Analysis Terminable and Interminable" (1937), he notes, "a permanent settlement of an instinctual demand does not happen. The demand does not disappear. It is tamed" (326).

All subjectivities that confine the expression of identification (and desire), which would include both femininity and masculinity, thus constitute compromises. To the extent that this "inner world" is "created through the denial of the 'other,' this counts as pain" and is mourned (1937, 146). Jacqueline Rose insightfully identifies the process of unconscious resistance to the closure of gender identity. She states, "The unconscious constantly reveals the 'failure' of identity. Because there is no continuity of psychic

<sup>12</sup> Freud also speaks of our "psychical hermaphroditism" (1920, 210) and our "predisposition towards bisexuality" (1905a, 136).

<sup>13</sup> Klein and Rose are not the only feminist scholars to campaign against a maturation reading of Freud. See also Goldner 1991; Brennan 1993; Benjamin 1994, 1996; Chodorow 1995; Layton 1998



life, so there is no stability of sexual identity, no position for women (or for men) which is ever simply achieved. Nor does psychoanalysis see such 'failure' as a special-case inability or an individual deviancy from the norm. 'Failure' is not a moment to be regretted in a process of adaptation, or development into normality . . . 'failure' is something endlessly repeated and relived moment by moment throughout our individual histories . . . there is a resistance to identity at the very heart of psychic life" (1986, 90–91). Freud even refers to intersexuality directly, to argue that the primal polymorphous perversity is biologically determined. He writes, "For it appears that a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs naturally" (1905c, 142), and "the psychic character traits depend to a greater or lesser extent on their somatic counterparts" (1905b, 220).

Freud's radical theory of the ambivalence of identification sits uncomfortably beside the now more familiar aspects of psychoanalytic theory—the Oedipus complex and derogation of female sexuality—found in *The Interpretation of Dreams* ([1913] 1999), "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905c), and *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1961). How are these conflicting claims balanced?

Partial explanation resides in Freud's own theoretical shifts as he develops a metapsychology of the death drive and the oedipal constellation, both of which introduce a temporality that will structure psychic processes and indeed the human condition itself. This is a movement from pleasures to bodies. So, for instance, from 1914 to 1918, against Jungian psychology, Freud emphasizes instinctual and incestuous impulses as the foundation from which human development operates (Simon and Blass 1991). Indeed, primary drives take precedence over sexuality, as allusion is made to an inverse triadic relationship in which the infant son's developing desire is directed toward his father. From 1919 to 1926, Freud stresses bisexuality and identificatory processes. Between 1931 and 1938, Freud returns to the pre-oedipal stage, a return initiated by thorny questions concerning female sexuality that presented problems in terms of both identification and desire. Freud must come to terms with a sexuality that emerges from a primary identification of both sexes with the mother. It is at this theoretical moment that Freud acknowledges that the oedipal triangle undersignifies the intense and diffuse libidinal workings—"the development and expression of sexual feelings and fantasies are intrinsic to this complexity and change in response to both internal and external (familial and cultural) pressures" (Simon and Blass 1991, 173). In other words, Freud must seek an account of how "an object is soldered on to instinct" such that heterosexuality predominates the field of social relations (Phillips 1997, 152).

Freud's exploration of "perversions" in "Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality" (1905c) seeks to evacuate psychoanalytic theory from a gnawing internal paradox. The radical social constructionist position from which Freud initiates his theory of polymorphous perversity juxtaposed against an overwhelmingly compromised heteronormative culture obliges Freud to introduce a criterion exempt from cultural relativism. This criterion is sexual reproduction. While Freud is clear that sexual activity is end-pleasure oriented and that there is no biological or evolutionary preference for reproduction, the shift in focus to this "end-result" effects a powerful association between sexual development and maturity. As Freud states, "every pathological disorder of sexual life is rightly to be regarded as an inhibition in development" (1905c, 208). So, Jerome Neu points out, "perverse sexuality is, ultimately, infantile sexuality" (1991, 185). Infantile sexuality might then be afforded free reign of nongenital forms of pleasure, as perversions are now associated with "regressed" and/or "fixated" pleasures rather than mature genital love. As Neu succinctly observes, "In practice . . . Freud collapses the individual's experienced concern for genital pleasure together with the biological function of reproduction, so that the development and maturation criterion for perversion reduces to the question of the suitability of a particular activity for reproduction. . . . An ideal of maturation that gives a central role to that function [reproduction] makes all earlier sexuality necessarily perverse. The infant's multiple sources of sexual pleasure make it polymorphously perverse" (1991, 187).

Davidson (1987) points to a second, related impetus for the shift toward sexual aim. Using a Foucauldian critique, Davidson notes that the psychiatric style of reasoning that emerged in the late 1800s made possible the delineation of perversions, including homosexuality, fetishism, sadism, and masochism (255). Davidson points out that these "perversions" could only be treated as expressions of the same "disease" if primacy were given to reproduction, requiring a corresponding emphasis on heterosexual, genital intercourse (262). Through this maneuver, emphasis is directed toward the genitals and sexual drive. "Normal" (i.e., sexual aim as heterosexual genital intercourse for reproduction) development now demands genital dimorphism (vagina *or* penis), gender identity dimorphism (woman *or* man), and maturity (*stable* gender identity).

### **Psychoanalytic approaches to Intersexuality**

Medical practitioners uniformly agree about the need to provide psychiatric support for intersex people and their families. At the same time,

however, psychoanalytic treatment of intersexed individuals is uncommon, due in part to the low incidence of intersexuality and in part to a general failure to recognize intersex patients (Oppenheimer 1995, 1191). In this section I want to review the few studies currently published on the psychoanalytic treatment of intersexed individuals, with a particular view to distilling their approach to gender identity and sexual desire. I am particularly keen to establish how such a focus on gender identity might influence treatment parameters.

In 1931, William Fairbairn published an analysis of an intersexed person who had approached treatment with uncertainties about her gender identity.<sup>14</sup> Fairbairn was primarily concerned with establishing the patient's "true" sex, and so he sent her to three separate specialists for examination. Despite the fact that these three specialists provided contradictory assessments of the patient's sex, Fairbairn nevertheless concluded that the patient was "really" a woman—determined in part because "psychosexually . . . she certainly conveyed the impression of being a woman; and she had considerable attraction for heterosexual men" (199). Fairbairn thus registers surprise that his patient does not react negatively to the revelation that she does not have a vagina. There are indications throughout the analysis that the patient might have wanted to explore her gender identity, but Fairbairn considers it unwise to disturb the original gender reassignment or reveal to the patient her physiologically intersexed condition. It appears to be of particular concern to Fairbairn that her gender identity as female be encouraged as this will provide a heterosexual framework for her sexual desire.

In "The Hermaphroditic Identity of Hermaphrodites" (1964), Robert Stoller reports on the case of an intersexed person who, in adulthood, reversed his medical reassignment as female to live as a man. This case adjoins an increasing number of reports of adolescent and adult intersexed individuals rejecting their assigned gender and choosing their own gender identity.<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Stoller analyzes intersex as "belong[ing] to an entity . . . not previously distinguished from other identity problems [that] . . . produces a different core gender identity and therefore a different life perspective" (455). Nevertheless, Stoller reiterates the impor-

<sup>14</sup> The bulk of psychoanalytic reports on intersex emanate from the United States, although Fairbairn's work is in Britain, Roland Berg and Gunilla Berg's work is in Sweden, and Agnès Oppenheimer's analysis took place in France. It is too early to speculate on whether the movement toward the recognition of gender identity ambivalence seen in the most recent American cases (Rosario 2001 and Williams 2001) extends beyond a U.S. context.

<sup>15</sup> See Stoller 1964; Hurtig 1992; Meyer-Bahlburg 1994, 1998; Diamond 1998, 1999; Dittmann 1998; Slijper et al. 1998; Reiner 1999; Hendricks 2000.

tance of medical and parental ascription of the "proper" sex to intersex infants in order to establish a core gender identity that is either female or male. Reporting on a case of an intersexed person, Stoller determines that the patient's gender identity issues stem from parental doubt as to the correctness of the gender reassignment. There is no consideration that the trauma of surgery, or the intersexed body itself, might have initiated the patient's gender identity questions.

In a later report, Stoller (1985) provides an analysis of Jack, an adolescent who was presumed female until virilization during adolescence prompted a medical workup that revealed male chromosomes and anatomy. Stoller recommends to the family that Jack change sex. Jack undergoes surgery, the family changes communities, and the young man's psychological, social, and cognitive difficulties are resolved. Although Stoller rejects both biological and psychoanalytic explanations for Jack's gender identity issues, he surmises that Jack failed to establish a symbiotic relationship with his mother concomitant with his establishment of a strong identification with his father. Stoller concludes, "the greatest mystery for me is the naturalness of Jack's masculinity. That, coupled with his lack of other neurotic problems, his successful and creative life, his openness, and his honesty is unexplained. Perhaps a psychoanalysis would uncover the roots of his normality, but one does not get to analyze such people" (74).

In two successive studies Roland Berg, Gunilla Berg, and Jan Svensson (1982) and Berg and Berg (1983) report on the psychotherapeutic analysis of thirty-three men with hypospadias. Using interviews about childhood recollections and projective tests, Berg and Berg compare the group of men with hypospadias with a matched control group. Based on a psychoanalytic claim that body appearance (especially genital malformations) will affect an individual's gender identity, the researchers predict that men with hypospadias will have a less secure gender identity. Interestingly, while slightly more men with hypospadias were judged to have an uncertain male identity (nineteen) compared to men with hypospadias who had a secure gender identity (fifteen), twelve men in the control group were also judged to be uncertain in their gender identity (1983, 158). Berg, Berg, and Svensson do not find any greater tendency toward a homosexual object choice and conclude that "the mere presence of a genital abnormality would . . . not be expected to disturb the development of *mature* object choice" (162; my emphasis). In the second study, Berg, Berg, and Svensson found that the men with hypospadias displayed slightly higher levels of neurotic constriction (1982, 149). The authors highlight the importance of the oedipal phase in the formation of both gender identity

and object choice, and they conclude that the realistic threat to the genitals faced by boys with hypospadias may cause higher levels of castration anxiety, which in turn causes ego function impediments (150). It is interesting to note that many children with hypospadias undergo repeated penile operations, often during the pre-oedipal phase. The authors do not seem to consider that the trauma of repeated surgery during this phase might also affect ego functioning, particularly in terms of difficulties with trust and shame (Nina Williams, personal correspondence with the author, October 7, 2001). Indeed, the authors use their results to recommend surgery during the pre-oedipal phase. These twenty-year-old studies have recently been followed up by Marc Mureau et al. (1997), who conclude that the men with hypospadias in their own study did not have poorer psychosocial adjustment or greater behavioral or emotional problems than their age-matched comparison subjects (382, 385).

In 1985, W. Keppel and H. Osofsky reported on the intended treatment of a fourteen-year-old intersexed child who had requested gender reassignment as male, again suggesting that the request for gender reassignment among intersexed people is much higher than early reports suggest. The patient was diagnosed with gender identity disorder, and "her" desire for gender reassignment was attributed to a delay in surgery until twenty-two months of age coupled with parental doubts about the gender reassignment. The authors note that the outgoing and active child became withdrawn and shy after "her" penis was removed and adamantly objected to estrogen treatment in adolescence. Nevertheless, the authors refuse to entertain the adolescent's desire for gender reassignment; the young person refuses attempts to secure his gender identity as female and leaves treatment.

Oppenheimer (1995) provides a detailed case report of an analysis of an intersexed patient. Oppenheimer notes that while the psychoanalytic treatment of intersexed patients is rare, the potential impact of such analyses is enormous, given the importance of sexual morphology for Freudian theories of gender identity and sexual development. Marielle was in her mid-thirties when she presented to Oppenheimer with persistent feelings of depression and difficulties with romantic attachments. In the course of therapy, Marielle reported having a dream in which she became a man, but she eventually accepts the gender identity that doctors assigned her at birth as well as hormone treatment and a clitoral reduction. Marielle is one of five intersexual patients that Oppenheimer has seen in therapy, and all five patients expressed doubts about their gender identity. Oppenheimer acknowledges the complex relationship between morphology

and psyche within psychoanalytic theory. On the one hand, "the drive is at the basis of destiny being determined by anatomy" (1995, 1192). Freud notes that "a certain degree of anatomical hermaphroditism occurs naturally" (1905c, 142), which determines the primal bisexual disposition (Oppenheimer 1995, 1192). On the other hand, Freud also argues that "the degree of physical hermaphroditism is to a great extent independent of the psychical hermaphroditism" (1920, 210). Oppenheimer leans toward the latter interpretation—"psychic factors predominate over biological determinism and anatomical characters"—but argues that in cases of biological ambiguity, an assignment of gender must nevertheless be made (1995, 1192).

In a break with the previous analyses' predilection for reinforcing a stable gender identity and "opposite" gender desire, Oppenheimer notes her own countertransference, prompted by her "need for a basis in one sex" (1995, 1201), which leads her to focus on therapeutic techniques that will help Marielle consolidate her female gender identity. Oppenheimer does suggest that her own difficulty in imagining Marielle as bisexual or sexless leads her, like Marielle's parents, to "deny . . . her masculine part, which she was disavowing with my complicity" (1995, 1195). In the first gesture toward early psychoanalytic theory evident in the intersex case reports, Oppenheimer concludes the analysis by suggesting that "psychic bisexuality, which is rooted in but independent of biology, accounts better for the development of the two sexes or the two genders" (1995, 1202).

A. Hurray's (2001) treatment of a prenatally androgenized adolescent girl focuses on affirming "her" gender reassignment as female by encouraging the patient to experiment with heterosexual sex. The patient's reports of gender ambiguity are analyzed as a wish formation, while her anatomical ambiguity is rejected as irrelevant to the analysis. In the same year, V. Rosario provided yet another report of an intersexual patient who, at the age of five, rejected his gender assignment as female, and at the age of ten is struggling with both positive and negative feelings about his masculinity as he faces major reconstructive surgery. This is the second intersex case report that draws on early Freudian psychoanalytic theory. Rosario suggests that assisting the patient to identify as intersexed may prompt the patient to reconsider the importance of reconstructive surgery (2001, 8).<sup>16</sup> Rosario's work counters the standard medical advice that

<sup>16</sup> I am not suggesting that the aim of psychoanalytic theory be to encourage intersexed patients to identify as intersexed. It is clear that most intersexed individuals identify as either

telling patients that they are intersexed will have a negative impact on the establishment and maintenance of a stable gender identity. Recent reports (Stoller 1985; Natarajan 1996; Creighton and Minto 2001a, 2001b) suggest that forthright disclosure actually enhances psychological functioning.

So far, only Oppenheimer and Rosario's analyses draw on Freudian psychoanalytic insights concerning the ambivalence and fragility of gender identity. In this respect, Williams (2001) offers by far the most promising analysis in terms of an acknowledgment of early Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The report concerns the case of Kristin, who initiated therapy because of lifelong depression. Over the course of therapy, Williams and Kristin work at uncovering the reasons for Kristin's therapy: childhood recollections of doctor's appointments and arguments with her parents, dreams, and the medication that Kristin has been instructed to take because of a "hormonal imbalance" eventually lead to discussions about Kristin's body and her feelings of insecurity and doubt that there is "something wrong with her" (2001b, 6). As Kristin becomes able to recall more memories of her medical treatment, the therapy focuses on Kristin's feelings of helplessness against medical and parental authority, trauma from the treatment, and her deepening conviction that her femininity was due more to the medication than a clearly "female" body (2001, 7). Through dream analysis, Williams recounts a pivotal experience in Kristin's life, that of being terribly shocked when she trusted her parents and doctors: "She described the doctor's appointment . . . when she was subjected to a pelvic examination by a male doctor who said only 'I need to see your scars.' Later he talked about her having 'male hormones,' and it was at this moment, as a shy twelve-year-old alone on an examination table, that Kristin began to replace her belief that doctors had damaged her with a worry that there had been something wrong with her to begin with" (2001, 7-8).

As well as focusing on the many conflicting feelings that Kristin is dealing with in therapy, Williams acknowledges her own preoccupation with determining whether Kristin is intersexed and her reluctance to talk to Kristin about this. Williams's honesty in dealing with this preoccupation "finally allows Kristin to express her anger at me [Williams] for wanting to know the cause of her condition rather than focusing on the trauma of its treatment" (2001, 10).

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women or men. This identity need not, however, preclude the exploration of feelings of gender ambiguity.

### Considerations in a psychoanalytic theory of gender identity and sexual desire

The current medical treatment of intersex infants assumes that children require a clear and stable female or male identity and that their genitals must adhere to this dimorphism. I suspect it is the case that since psychoanalysts do not usually encounter individuals who suspect or know they are intersexed, questions about the relationship between gender morphology and gender identity remain a case for abstract theory rather than actual patient analysis. When intersex individuals are encountered in a therapeutic setting, it is largely left to psychoanalysts to use their own conceptions of gender identity (Williams 2001). In most cases, this has led to a psychoanalytic preoccupation with determining the "true" sex of the patient and encouraging the patient's gender identity to comply with the prior medical determination. In this way, other issues such as trauma, trust, shame, anger, and helplessness as well as the potential to explore feelings of gender ambiguity are eclipsed by the concern for stable gender identity. For instance, Slijper et al. (1998) argue that the major aim of the psychotherapeutic intervention with intersex children is to get the children to accept their gender reassignment.<sup>17</sup> The relationship between dimorphic bodies and psychosocial functioning is assumed to be both clear and strong. In an editorial comment, Ian Aaronson, director of pediatric urology at the Medical University of South Carolina, writes, "we live in an age of increasing respect for minority rights. However, to advocate nonintervention in intersex infants until they are old enough to make up their own minds about what gender they want to be signifies a return to the 'dark ages' of intersex management, which has given rise to a host of *psychological cripples*" (1999, 119; my emphasis).

The expression of gender ambiguity, desire to undergo gender reassignment, or the resolute refusal of intersexed adults to undergo (further) surgical and hormonal intervention are often interpreted as problems of maturational development. Subjectivity is understood within a heteronormative framework, and this leads to both a narrow focus on genitals and an even more narrow view of how genitals should be experienced and used. For instance, against Freud's insights concerning the normative evaluation of perversion, Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel emphasizes that one of the key forms of perversion is the denial of "differences between the sexes" (1984, 2). Otto Kernberg believes that "infants establish a core gender identity that is male or female from the very start" (1995, 48) as

<sup>17</sup> The authors note that "it is beyond the capability of a child to develop an intersex identity" (1998, 142).



a prerequisite to the later development of mature relationships. Indeed, Kernberg argues that "mature sexual love" is achieved in part through the "integration of . . . representations of self into a consolidated self concept" (1995, 34).

It need not be the case, however, that the psychoanalyst's aim be to reinforce medical decisions about gender reassignment. Indeed, focusing on the intersexed body may only solidify the intersexed child as a symbol of disorder and monstrosity (Oudshoorn 1994; Williams, personal correspondence, October 7, 2001; see also Williams 2001; Hird 2002). It may also decrease the likelihood that intersexed people will seek psychotherapy if these individuals perceive that their feelings of gender ambiguity will not be heard within a milieu that only recognizes two genders.

While it has traditionally been assumed that psychopathology found among the intersex population is caused by the trauma of growing up with a gender anomaly, coupled with parents' doubts about the appropriateness of the gender identity assignment of their child, there is growing evidence to suggest this may not be the only possible explanation. First, it is not at all clear that individuals who grow up with genital anomalies experience psychological or developmental issues. Although not a psychoanalyst, John Money reported in his 1951 Ph.D. dissertation that the ten intersex individuals he interviewed, who had had no surgery or hormone treatment, showed no evidence of neurotic psychopathology (in Colapinto 2000). This report is significant, as Money went on to forge the standard medical protocol for intersex infants, involving repeated surgical procedures and hormone treatment. Morgan Holmes reports that of "seventy case studies of adolescents and adults who grew up with visibly anomalous genitalia . . . only one . . . was an individual deemed potentially psychotic, and the potential illness was connected to a psychotic parent and not the sexual ambiguity" (1995, 5). Joan and John Hampson write, "the surprise is that so many ambiguous-looking patients were able, appearance notwithstanding, to grow up and achieve a rating of psychologically healthy, or perhaps only mildly unhealthy" (in Fausto-Sterling 2000, 95). Recall that Berg and Berg's studies found that an almost equal number of men in the control group had questions about their gender identity, as did the men with hypospadias. As Bruce Wilson and William Reiner note, "it is increasingly clear that children can come to recognize their differing gender identity from their infancy-assigned identity without major psychological collapse or psychiatric illness" (1998, 365).

And while there are a plethora of studies that hypothesize the risks to gender-reassigned boys of developing gender identity issues from not be-

ing able to urinate in a standing position or win at urination contests, or experiencing embarrassment when changing in public locker rooms (Mureau et al. 1997), researchers are only beginning to consider the risks of developing psychosocial problems from the trauma of the surgery, medical and parental withholding of information, and the effect of the parents' own trauma on their child. To give just one example, the surgical creation of a vagina in children who are gender reassigned as female requires a lifelong program of vaginal dilation with prosthetic devices up to three or four times per day. As Sallie Foley and George Morley write, "the pediatrician must depend more on parental involvement with vaginal dilation. If the patient is too young to understand dilation, then reactions of anxiety, anger, depression and fear can become associated with the parents' attempt to continue this mechanical therapy. Thus, ironically, procedures designed to promote adjustment and normalcy for these patients can instead result in psychosexual problems" (1992, 74).<sup>18</sup> Tamara Alexander (1997) argues that this type of medical management constitutes childhood sexual abuse, and Suzanne Kessler provides compelling evidence that parents expected to dilate their children's surgically constructed vaginas feel the same (1998, 58–64).

Moreover, it is not at all clear that gender reassignment "works" in the sense of providing a clear basis for an intersex child's sense of gender identity. It is now increasingly clear that "the primacy of early sex assignment, potential sexual function, fertility, and the cosmetic appearance of reconstructed genitalia as clinical decision-making rubrics might appear to be an assumption, not a deduction" (Reiner 1999, 364). The number of intersexed people seeking gender reassignment in adolescence and adulthood, and the growing politicization of intersexed people against surgery that they consider to be both nonconsensual and cosmetic, at the very least suggests that intersex gender identity is more complicated than current management protocols allow. Nor is it clear that gender reassignment increases the likelihood of "opposite" gender desire, although this is clearly a major concern for clinicians.<sup>19</sup> A number of studies suggest

<sup>18</sup> The Frank (nonsurgical) Procedure is a preferred treatment because it does not require surgery. However, dilation of twenty to thirty minutes, three to four times a day, is still required, with the major aim of creating a vagina that can "receive" a penis. Foley and Morley's article is representative of the majority of medical articles that assume the major consideration will be "normal" heterosexual relations and the desire to have children (see Randolph, Hung, and Rathlev 1981).

<sup>19</sup> See Lev-Ran 1974; Dittmann, Kappes, and Kappes 1992; Hurlig 1992; Shijper et al. 1992; Zucker and Bradley 1995; Zucker et al. 1996; Bradley et al. 1998.

that sexuality is a much more fluid and complex phenomenon. Moreover, many gender-reassigned individuals identify as lesbian or gay (Creighton and Minto 2001b).

I have argued that possibilities for alternate readings of psychoanalytic theory may indeed present a space to challenge the uncritical acceptance of sexual difference and maturational goals. For instance, one obvious line of analysis to explore is the controversial erotic movement in females from clitoris to vagina as a requirement of maturational development. The medical literature on intersex is clearly aligned with this traditional Freudian concept (outlined in "Three Essays on the Theory of Female Sexuality" [1905c]), which prioritizes the capacity for vaginal penetration in women over the capacity for clitoral stimulation. In one of many studies on clitoroplasty, Judson Randolph, Wellington Hung, and Mary Rathlev argue, "a sizeable amount of argument was mustered to show that sexual gratification could be achieved after amputation or removal of the clitoris" (1981, 883).<sup>20</sup> The impetus for surgery is twofold: ensuring that an opening is large enough to accommodate a penis, and excising a clitoris that is "embarrassing or offensive and incompatible with satisfactory feminine presentation or adjustment" (1981, 885).<sup>21</sup> Asked how many of the women who had been surgically "corrected" experienced orgasms, one surgeon reported that "adequate intercourse was defined as successful vaginal penetration" (Dreger 1998a, 10). Intersex surgeries give preference to sexual function for gender-reassigned males and reproductive function for gender-reassigned females. Using a psychoanalytic lens, we would want to consider whether clitoral surgery is necessary to achieve the aim of "normal" heterosexual intercourse and, more broadly, a stable gender identity as female. In preferencing heteronormativity, have we disguised

<sup>20</sup> The authors cite anthropological evidence of "primitive cultures" (1981, 883) that practice female genital mutilation as evidence supporting the priority placed on vaginal pleasure. See also Edgerton 1993; Coventry 2000; and Fausto-Sterling 2000 for further examples.

<sup>21</sup> This particular medical report is interesting because it details a number of results that should prompt therapeutic concern. First, one of the patients "adamantly refused further surgery in spite of the disfiguring prominence of her clitoris" (1981, 885). Four more patients are "lost to follow-up." Interviews with the mothers of these intersexed children revealed that 38 percent of the marriages were strained, and a further twenty-three marriages ended in divorce during the diagnosis and treatment of their children. Moreover, "a number" of the mothers reported that their husbands opposed the surgery. The gender-reassigned girls reported difficult relationships with their parents, a lack of knowledge about their surgery and the function of the clitoris, as well as low opinions of themselves and a fear of peer rejection. See Slijper et al. 1998 for another example of intersexed patients who discontinued treatment because of a rejection of the clinicians' attempts to solidify a stable gender identity.

the traumatic and ambivalent process through which all individuals achieve gender identity and sexual desire, regardless of their morphology?

Rather than attempting to refine the predictability of gender identity and sexual desire, the more relevant question intersexuality raises is whether or not we can develop an understanding of "mature" relations with a nonheteronormative and nonocular concept of bodies and their pleasures. This task will depend, in part, on how maturity is defined.<sup>22</sup> As I have sought to argue, the answer lies in the hegemonic position of heteronormativity and its reliance on genitalia as the signifier of gender difference. Throughout this essay I have argued that the current psychoanalytic approach, predicated on the salience of maturation for "normal" development, obscures the radical claims of early psychoanalytic theory—that "it is not a 'natural' sexual instinct that loses its way to become perversion, but it is perverse sexuality that is molded, or 'restrained' into normality" (Mieli, quoted in Nierenberg 1998, 9). In other words, the insights Freud made concerning the structural inheritance of human subjectivity—the traumatic, partial, fluid, and melancholic aspect of identity formation—have been subsumed within much contemporary psychoanalytic theory such that *acquired* dispositions now become constitutional, stable, and inevitable (Nierenberg 1998, 18). As such, the psychoanalytic management of intersex forgets an "important paradox: it is precisely the 'perverse' quality of the drive that is normal" (1998, 9). Here Tim Dean's reading of psychoanalytic theory as a queer theory leads to the recognition that "the truly psycho-analytic insight in this account of sexuality is that the process of normalization . . . inevitably fails. . . . The unconscious is a sign of that failure and of the inescapable queerness or perversity of sex in human subjects" (2000, 6). Or, as Ona Nierenberg recognizes, "what we have in common is our discontents, idiosyncratic as they may be" (1998, 22).

Even more broadly, we must ask what intersex bodies might mean for a psychoanalytic theory of the body and psyche generally. Rather than providing a theory of intersex gender identity and desire, the more powerful analysis seeks to contemplate a theory of gender identity and desire from a position of intersex, of morphological diversity. As Riki Anne Wilchins writes, "Why are transbodies forced to pronounce a discourse on themselves in a way that those of the people studying us are not? Why

<sup>22</sup> In the first instance, we need to consider whether maturity should be defined as favorable in all contexts. Neu wryly notes that "after all, if we live long enough, we eventually decay. Later does not necessarily mean better" (1991, 188).

are [intersex] people forced to produce a binary sexed identity? . . . What kinds of categories of analysis would emerge if nontransgender anthropological bodies were forced to explicate themselves in terms of intersexuality, rather than the other way around? What kinds of new, insightful, and productive categories of analysis are out there, lurking just beyond the naturalized construction in which we all customarily traffic?" (Valentine and Wilchins 1997, 220–21).

Freud was cognizant of the need to shift the emphasis from a theory about "perversions" to a theory about "normality." Speaking about homosexuality, Freud wrote, "psycho-analytic research is most decidedly opposed to any attempt at separating off homosexuals from the rest of mankind [*sic*] . . . from the point of view of psycho-analysis the exclusive sexual interest felt by men for women *is also a problem that needs elucidating and is not a self-evident fact*" (in Zucker and Bradley 1995, 1).

As a first step, we need to increase awareness about intersex and provide a more substantial research base from which to analyze the particular issues that intersex raises for gender identity and sexuality. Rather than primarily attempting to establish intersex patients' "true" gender and encouraging patients to accept the gender that has been assigned to them, psychoanalytic therapy need not reject the notion of gender ambiguity. Indeed, "in many intersex situations, one can argue that it is not a sign of mental disorder but a sign of appropriate awareness when a patient has questions about his/her gender" (Berg and Berg 1983, 28). There is increasing reason to question the traditional assumption that stable gender identity requires unambiguous genital dimorphism, or indeed that subjectivity requires stable identity. But as yet there has been a "curious silence from the inheritors of the twentieth century's most elaborate theory connecting psyche to body ego" (Williams 2001, 2). I believe it is difficult to discuss identity, pleasures, gender, and sexual difference without psychoanalytic theory, as it is from psychoanalytic theory that the notion of the social constructedness of these concepts derives. I also believe it is vital for feminist scholars to be aware of the therapeutic rationales informing intersex treatment, especially insofar as these rationales reiterate a particular sociopolitical association between gender identity and sexual desire.

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## Feminist Solidarity after Queer Theory: The Case of Transgender

**I**t is by now clear that feminist politics needs to speak to (and be spoken by) many more subjects than women and men, heterosexual women and lesbians. How—in theory and in practice—should feminism engage bisexuality, intersexuality, transsexuality,<sup>1</sup> transgender, and other emergent identities that reconfigure both conventional and conventionally feminist understandings of sex, gender, and sexuality?<sup>2</sup> For me this question takes its most pressing forms when I think about how effective alliances can be forged in feminist spaces. How should feminists imagine and create communities that take the institutions and practices of sex, gender, and sexuality to be politically relevant to liberation? How might such communities incorporate our manifest and intransigent diversity *and* build solidarity?

In this article I work through these questions with reference to the leitmotiv of transgender. Following Susan Stryker, in this article I use *trans* as a broad umbrella adjective intended to capture the multiple forms of sex and gender crossing and mixing that are taken by their practitioners to be significant life projects. I use *transgendered* to describe anyone who lives a gender they were not perinatally assigned or that is not publicly recognizable within Western cultures' binary gender systems, and I use *transsexed* to describe anyone who undergoes (or hopes to undergo) any

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<sup>1</sup> There is some political debate about whether "transsexual" is a spelling preferable to "transsexual." Some critics have suggested that an integrated rather than a compound noun avoids the problematic implication that transsexuals "cross sexes." See Wilchins 1997, 15. I will use the more familiar "ss" spelling throughout.

<sup>2</sup> The very separability and meaningfulness of the terms *sex*, *gender*, and *sexuality* are called into question by many of these identities. In particular, this article implicitly challenges the distinction between *sex* (the body as male or female) and *gender* (the social role of the individual as a man or a woman). Thus I will use the phrase *sex-gender identity* to avoid the impression that this distinction is being upheld.

of a number of physical interventions to bring hir sexed body more closely into line with hir gender identity.<sup>3</sup>

Feminists of all stripes share the political goal of weakening the grip of oppressive sex and gender dimorphisms in Western cultures, with their concomitant devaluing of the lesser terms *female* and *feminine*. This move has opened up new possibilities for individuals, but it is also, over time, generating a whole new field of meaning within which some identities may eventually cease to exist while others are being created. At this very general level, a wide range of gendered subjects stand to gain from challenges to enforced binaries within the nexus of sex, gender, and sexuality. At a more specific level, however, the complexities of oppression and privilege, and conflicting ideological and strategic approaches to politics, have conspired to fracture feminist and queer communities along identity fault lines. Despite the fact that many transgendered people are daily the victims of the most intense and public attempts to discipline gender in ways feminists have long criticized, "trans liberation" and "feminism" have often been cast as opposing movements. I will seek to explain and argue against this division, without entirely conceding the normative concerns that motivate it.

However political resistance through transforming gender has been articulated, the struggle has been on the disputed terrain where the life of the individual meets its institutional and historical conditions of possibility. Part of feminism is changing those institutions and creating new history, but in the interim feminists must make sense of the scope and limits of our agency *within* structures of oppression and privilege. In this space, ethics meets politics: feminism entails not only organizing for change but also changing oneself. Another backdrop to this essay, then, is my larger interest in the ethics of self-transformation. Although gender is often experienced as a deeply authentic aspect of the individual self, many theorists have persuasively argued that gender identities must be understood as *relationally* formed. With theorists such as Jessica Benjamin (1995), I will start from the claim that gender is not best understood simply as an attribute of individuals but rather as a set of often hierarchical relations among differently gendered subjects. Thus any project that takes

<sup>3</sup> This usage follows Stryker 1994, 251–52, n. 2. Of course, these terms are contested within trans communities: see Prosser 1998, esp. 200–205, for an alternative reading; and Cromwell 1999, esp. 19–30, for yet another. Leslie Feinberg has introduced the pronouns *hir* (in place of her/his) and *ze* (in place of he/she) to describe himself; I will use them throughout this article.

up the ethics of self-transformation will be necessarily linked to the questions about community I want to raise.

Initially, I offer a critical analysis of two very different feminist texts: the 1994 reissue of Janice Raymond's notorious *The Transsexual Empire: The Making of the She-Male* (originally published in 1979) and Bernice Hausman's 1995 book *Changing Sex: Transsexualism, Technology, and the Idea of Gender*. Rather than understanding transgendered people as working within an ethics of self-transformation with which all feminists must grapple, Raymond and Hausman's otherwise theoretically contrasting texts represent the transsexual (qua monolithic representative of all transgender subjectivities) as uniquely mired in pathology. Both commentators draw on the classification of transsexuality as a mental "disorder" to make their case; by persistently foreclosing all possibilities for political resistance to a disease model, they construct trans people as lacking both agency and critical perspective. By showing in some detail how these strategies of foreclosure work, I hope, first, to develop the negative case presented by Sandy Stone (1991) that influential non-trans feminists have orientalized the trans subject and concomitantly failed to investigate their authorial locations as stably gendered subjects. This reductive characterization of the transsexual as the dupe of gender then permits the conclusion that transgender politics writ large have no feminist potential.

Charges of political quietism against transsexuals present one set of challenges to meaningful political alliances between trans and non-trans feminists. A second set of difficulties is raised by the genre of popular trans feminist polemic, epitomized by authors such as Kate Bornstein, Leslie Feinberg, and Riki Anne Wilchins. This literature voices the views of trans people with radical gender politics, moving beyond the traditional forums of sensationalized autobiography or objectifying psychological studies. These authors properly advocate the right to express and develop a gender identity not determinately linked to birth sex; however, I will argue that too often this literature falls back onto an implausibly atomistic self that is given normative free rein to assert its gender. Taking Feinberg's remarks in his recent book *Trans Liberation: Beyond Pink or Blue* (1998) as exemplar, I will contest his implication that a feminist politics should tolerate any "gender expression." A failure to understand gender as relational (and hierarchical) leads Feinberg to elide certain normative implications of his account. Specifically, he does not examine the fact that the expression of one gender may limit the possible meanings or opportunities available to others. Adopting the language of individual freedom of expression with regard to gender, then, will sidestep important ethicopolitical questions that arise from gender relations and the demands of community.

Thus feminist writing about transgender needs to define and articulate a middle ground in which an ethics of self-fashioning can be developed. Such an ethics should recognize the discursive limits on individual self-transformation without denying agency to gendered subjects. It must also engage the politics of self-transformation in a broader field, where one's choices affect others' identities and possibilities.

### Where is the author?

I am acutely aware of the pitfalls of writing about trans people from a vantage point as a non-trans woman and someone who is not actively involved with extra-academic trans communities.<sup>4</sup> Questions about the location of a non-trans author in an article primarily concerned with trans issues are important; my personal motivations are, as always, deeply intertwined with the structure of my arguments. This is perhaps especially important to acknowledge when much of what has been written about trans people by non-trans feminists has not only been hostile but has also taken an explicit *dis*identification with transsexuals' experiences as its critical standpoint.<sup>5</sup> This move runs counter to familiar feminist political commitments to respecting what the marginalized say about themselves and seems to ignore the risks of orientalism.<sup>6</sup> It also inhibits alliances between trans and non-trans feminists; theorists' inclination to stress deep differences between these groups attenuates the political motivation to investigate shared experiences. In fact, for a long time I sustained a marked feminist suspicion of transsexuality, based largely on popular (feminist) portrayals.<sup>7</sup> However, the first two transsexual people I came to know

<sup>4</sup> I have tried to write this article in the spirit of Jacob Hale's "Suggested Rules for Non-transsexuals Writing about Transsexuals, Transsexuality, Transsexualism, or Trans—" (1997).

<sup>5</sup> In his critique of Bernice Hausman, Jay Prosser argues that Hausman "blocks out" her own gender identity and embodiment in order tacitly to justify her authorial location "outside of" transsexuality as "the authoritative site from which to speak" (1998, 132–33). Janice Raymond's text is similarly at pains to show that transsexuals' attitudes are fundamentally inimical to a particular kind of identity politics, while being devoid of any critical examination of the author's location and investments in the identity being defended.

<sup>6</sup> I am thinking here of "orientalism" in all of the senses invoked by Edward Said, but the most striking analogy with feminist treatments of transgender is perhaps with his claim that "Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (1978, 3).

<sup>7</sup> See Gamson 1998 for analysis of the intense manipulation of representations of trans people in U.S. talk shows. There is a remarkable continuity between some of the stereotypes Gamson discusses and those upheld within feminist contexts.

socially (one male-to-female [MTF], one female-to-male [FTM]) disrupted this suspicion: both were feminists, and both were involved (in very different ways) in queer communities.<sup>8</sup> I have since read, listened to, and corresponded with many more trans people in the context of my feminist theoretical work. I am not claiming any epistemic authority here, and this is certainly not a representative sample—any more than my genetic women colleagues in feminist studies are. However, I have also known a lot of other people who have struggled with gender—as butches, femmes, women working in male-dominated occupations, female and male survivors of sexual violence, male feminists, gay men, bisexual feminists, and so on. Over several years, I have come to see connections among these different people that make me less inclined to separate out transsexuals, or trans people in general, as traitors to a cause certain others share.

The two most salient personal aspects of this inquiry, however, have been, first, my visibility as a bisexual feminist woman, and, second, the alliances and conflicts this identification has produced. Despite my qualms about the term *bisexual*, this descriptor provides a kind of home for me, when everywhere else feels worse. Both heterosexual and lesbian spaces have their own comforts for women, and I have often been excluded from both. I have also been told that I needed to change to fit into those spaces—by acceding either to my true hetero- or homosexuality—and I have felt the moments of truth as well as the sometime hypocrisy and complacency of those demands. As I want to argue in this article, making oneself over into a more politically appealing subject—even (perhaps especially) if one is well-motivated by political theory to do so—cannot be accomplished by fiat. Sometimes, as Sandra Bartky points out, one's desires, pleasures, and aspirations will resist even the most determined attempts at refashioning (1990, 45–62). It is both necessary and troubling to seek out a home as a gendered or sexual being: necessary because community, recognition, and stability are essential to human flourishing and political resistance, and troubling because those very practices too often congeal into political ideologies and group formations that are exclusive or hegemonic. Non-trans feminists have a responsibility, I think, to consider trans issues in light of these social realities, which hit particularly hard for those who live along their fault lines.

My second, related, motivation comes from a deep sense of unease

<sup>8</sup> Again, the terms *MTF* and *FTM* are disputed in trans communities. For example, some prefer the terms *female-to-female* or *male-to-male* to capture the subjective experience of transition rather than its perception by others, while others use *mtf* or *ftm*, rejecting the capitalization as an acronym that misleadingly signals discrete identities.



with my own body. I am quite clear that I am not a transsexual, but I have often wished (including for periods of years at a time) to be in a different body. In some ways, I feel as though the body I have is the *wrong* body: too large, too female in some respects, too clumsy. Surely an incisive intellectual mind requires an equally lean and skillful body?<sup>9</sup> When it comes to the kind of body I most want, I feel quite ridiculously fearless in the face of the physical risks that attaining that body might necessitate, even though I am well aware of their practical and political perils. This is one of the reasons—for better or worse—that I am gripped by the phenomenology of transgender. Experiences like mine are at least partially explicable within the insightful feminist frameworks offered by commentators such as Susan Bordo (1993). If this is so, it would seem that the experience of one's body failing to conform to one's identity, and the conflicted desire to change that body, ought to be recognizable to non-trans women. Yet it is the demand for bodily modifications on the part of transsexed people that has most provoked feminist commentators and been characterized as the most politically regressive and *foreign* of desires. For example, in a startlingly dissociative moment Bernice Hausman speculates that "*those of us who are not transsexuals* may wonder what it is like to feel oneself 'in the wrong body'" (1995, 174; emphasis mine). In the first part of the article, I try to answer the question of why this phenomenological connection has seemed so unavailable to non-trans feminists.

### Feminists construct transsexuality

Whether appropriated to bolster queer theoretical claims, represented as the acid test of constructionism, or attacked for suspect political commitments, transgender has been colonized as a feminist theoretical testing ground. As subjects who explore what Michel Foucault (1988) called "technologies of the self" in particularly literal forms, transgendered people seem paradigmatic of many of the most pressing feminist anxieties about identity, gender, and personal transformation.

Janice Raymond's oeuvre is part of a tradition of radical feminism that

<sup>9</sup> Bordo (1993, 139–54) argues convincingly that what she labels the axes of dualism and control conspire to create social conditions in Western cultures where mental acuity, or the lack of it, is believed to be reflected in the body's form, especially for women. One implication that Bordo does not explore is that it is very difficult for fat women to be taken seriously as intellectuals; I am greatly indebted to April Herndon for her insightful analysis of this topic.

stressed the autonomy of women from men, using understandings of heterosexuality as a compulsory institution to bring relationships between women and men into the political sphere (e.g., Rich 1980). Stressing the realities of violence against women, economic dependence, unequal division of domestic labor, and an ideology of self-sacrifice, feminists denaturalized heterosexual relationships, recommending instead that women become "woman-identified." In this context, early lesbian feminists created a new category of woman-identified women, resistant to the pull of compulsory heterosexuality and likely to generate liberatory spaces within which women could transform themselves (e.g., Radicalesbians 1988). This paradigm is conceptually and politically dependent on the radical separation of women from men, and indeed lesbian feminists have continued to emphasize the importance of self-definition and willful separation in creating feminist communities (e.g., Frye 1983, 95–109; Card 1990).

Raymond's work on transsexuality thus emerges from a paradigm in which dissociation from men and masculinity, combined with self-definition and control of women's identity, are prime political values. *The Transsexual Empire* ([1979] 1994) has become the archetypal articulation of radical feminist hostility to transsexuality and has had a persistent influence on feminist perceptions of transgender.<sup>10</sup> Raymond's early investigation of the

<sup>10</sup> For contemporaneous analyses that recapitulate some of Raymond's theses, see Daly (1978) 1990, 67–68, 71–72 (and 238 and 287 for notes explicitly endorsing aspects of Raymond's position); and Yudkin 1978. More recent endorsements: Claudia Card describes *The Transsexual Empire* as "the most powerful treatise on the ethics and politics of male-to-constructed female [sic] transsexualism" (Card 1994, xv). Alluding to Raymond's work, Kathy Miriam writes that "recent 'transgender' militancy is a clear indication that feminist lesbian fears in the 1970's were not paranoid, but a realistic apprehension of the significance of 'lesbian' transsexuals as a penetration of woman-only space by men" (Miriam 1993, 52, n. 116, emphasis in original). Sheila Jeffreys (1993, esp. 142–63) also endorses Raymond's position, inverting the analysis to portray FTMs as lesbian deserters who mimic the misogynist aspects of gay male culture. In a recent *Village Voice* editorial, Norah Vincent attributes the legitimacy of transsexuality to the ascendancy of postmodern philosophy, in a way reminiscent of Raymond's sarcastic treatment of Stone (Raymond [1979] 1994, xxi). Vincent writes: "[Transsexuality] signifies the death of the self, the soul, that good old-fashioned indubitable 'I' so beloved of Descartes, whose great adage 'I think, therefore I am' has become an ontological joke on the order of 'I tinker, and there I am'" (2001). Other recent recapitulations of aspects of Raymond's position (and critical responses) can be found in discussions surrounding organizers' refusal to admit (openly) trans women to the Michigan Womyn's Music Festival (MWMF). See Morris 1999, 171–74; the letters pages in the alternative magazine *Lesbian Connection*; and messages posted to the festival Web board at <http://www.michfest.com/>. I am indebted to Mary Gebhart for sharing her invaluable primary research and critical analysis of the rift between trans and lesbian feminists at MWMF (dis-

medical discourses and institutions that police transsexuality is a significant contribution to feminist scholarship, and her critical commentary on John Money's theories of gender identity remains valuable (and topical in light of recent media fascination with the cases he managed) (Raymond [1979] 1994, 43–68).<sup>11</sup> However, despite a number of critical analyses of Raymond's overall approach (such as Riddell 1996; Califia 1997, 86–108), no commentator pays sufficiently close attention to the details of her views, which are often defended by theorists who would eschew any overt connection with her approach. It is against this background that I take up the "new introduction on transgender" to the 1994 reissue of *The Transsexual Empire*. I suggest that Raymond's resistance to changing her position is not simply a principled refusal. Feminists writing about transgender are, as Ludwig Wittgenstein would say, held captive by a picture within which the history of fetishizing trans people combines with a lack of critical attention to the privilege of being stably gendered to erase the possibility of a trans feminist politics, and, hence, the possibility of alliance between trans and non-trans feminists. This picture needs to be made visible *as* a picture before it can be dispelled.<sup>12</sup>

In her 1994 introduction, Raymond again restricts membership in the category "women" to those with a shared female history, explicitly excluding MTF transsexuals. Raymond's ad hoc attempts to exclude MTFs while including all genetic women are rather unconvincing, and I will not

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certation in progress, Michigan State University, American Studies Program). Finally, Raymondian understandings of MTF identity have been reiterated in debates in Canada around human rights claims brought by transsexuals against their exclusion from positions in feminist organizations reserved for women. See Michele Landsberg's commentary in the *Toronto Star* (2000).

<sup>11</sup> The cause célèbre that recently brought Money and his theories into the public eye is the John/Jean case, where a male infant was surgically altered to have feminized genitals following a botched circumcision. The child was raised as a girl, while his identical twin brother was raised as a boy. In adolescence and young adulthood John rejected his female gender identity and began to live as a man, demanding medical treatment to restore—insofar as this was possible—a male body, and eventually marrying and adopting children. Interestingly enough, in media exposés of this case, Money was portrayed as overly casual about the link between sex and gender, dogmatically insisting that early childhood socialization could imprint gender identity, regardless of biological sex. Predictably, the case has been taken to make the explicitly antifeminist point that boys and girls are born rather than made, although it has also provided some succor for opponents of damaging cosmetic genital surgeries on intersexed children. See Colapino 1997; and Chase 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein says "A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably" (1958, sec. 115). For a detailed account of this Wittgensteinian approach to genealogy as political therapy, see Owen 2003.

elaborate or rebut them here.<sup>13</sup> At the root of her exclusion of transsexuals from the category women (and, hence, of course, from women-only spaces) is a critique of institutions that, Raymond argues, make transsexuality possible. On her reading, MTF transsexuals are artifacts of patriarchal medical practices that appropriate women's bodies and perpetuate gender essentialism and, hence, oppression; within this model, transsexuals themselves practice misogynist forms of femininity and deny their male privilege. Key to this construction is Raymond's critique of the medicalization of transsexuality, particularly of the classification of "gender identity disorder" as a pathology by the infamous *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* of the American Psychiatric Association ("the DSM").<sup>14</sup> Raymond renders transsexuality co-causal with its disease classification and also suggests that transsexuals are complicitous with some medical experts' sexist norms ([1979] 1994, xvi, 34).<sup>15</sup> These conclusions depend on the validity of a number of controversial premises: first, that the identities of all trans people can be captured using a theoretical model avowedly based on a small sample of primarily MTF transsexuals; second, that all trans people are dependent on thoroughgoing sex reassignment surgery (SRS) for the successful expression of their identities; and third, that the desire to change one's body in order to accommodate one's identity in this way is conclusive evidence of antifeminist political commitments. This final premise is particularly interesting to me because so many non-trans women also undertake to dramatically change their bodies for reasons arguably connected to gender identity: bodybuilders, athletes, dieters, anorectics, and cosmetic surgery candidates, among others. Rather than exploring these analogies, Raymond emphasizes *disanalogies* with other social hierarchies—race, age, and class in particular.

<sup>13</sup> The essentialist claim that we can think of "women" as a category with necessary and sufficient conditions of membership has been widely challenged by feminists, including myself, who have recommended alternative forms of generalization. For example, I have argued that "women" should be understood as a Wittgensteinian family resemblance concept (Heyes 2000a). This approach precludes the kind of ad hoc boundary defense that ensnares Raymond; however, it still leaves many political questions unresolved.

<sup>14</sup> With its spiraling taxonomies of "mental disorders," almost invariably described as if they were psychic states entirely separable from cultural and historical context, the DSM-IV itself is not a document I want to defend. It uses the classification "gender identity disorder," for which the primary symptoms are "a strong and persistent cross-gender identification (not merely a desire for any perceived cultural advantages of being the other sex [*sic*])" and "persistent discomfort with his or her sex or sense of inappropriateness in the gender role of that sex" (American Psychiatric Association 1994, 537).

<sup>15</sup> References to Raymond's (1979) 1994 "new introduction on transgender" can be identified by page numbers in roman numerals.

What is interesting about these appeals, however, is that they seem to complicate rather than clarify the point she wants to make. Most purchasers of antiwrinkle creams, face-lifts, and related beauty treatments are expressing a relatively depoliticized "age dissatisfaction," and the cosmetics and cosmetic surgery industries are engaged in constructing discourses that pathologize age. An increasingly common psychology in selling these products is to encourage potential consumers to think of themselves as young people trapped in an older person's body—an uncanny echo of transsexual discourse (Morgan 1998, 327). Raymond asks, "Does a Black person who wants to be white suffer from the 'disease' of being a 'transracial'?" and claims, "there is no demand for transracial medical intervention precisely *because* most Blacks recognize that it is their society, not their skin, that needs changing" ([1979] 1994, xvi). Yet her point about "transracial" medical intervention is simply false: cosmetic modifications that aim to make features of bodies less ethnically or racially marked abound, from hair-straightening treatments for African Americans, to nose jobs for Jews, to eyelid surgery for East Asians, to the ubiquitous skin-bleaching creams marketed to people of color. Where the disanalogy with other social groups seems most marked is in the case of socioeconomic class. Yet even here there are ways of expressing dissatisfaction with one's class status that, for better or worse, seek their remedy in changes to the body: to the extent that obesity connotes "trashiness" in North America, for example, dieting has a socioeconomic subtext. Likewise, dieting is marketed to women in particular using the language of a thin person "just dying to get out" of her fat body.

While Raymond's attempts at disanalogy may fail, she would be right to point out that these forms of self-fashioning are hardly random expressions of presocial desires and that all take place in larger political contexts. And while transsexuality often operates using a much more medicalized and depoliticized discourse than the other examples, to understand why, we need both a broader understanding of the history of sexuality and a more careful evaluation of how that history confronts individuals. To the extent that "sex," "gender," and "sexuality" have come to be thought of as core ontological facts about individuals, organized through a binary schema, discourses of transsexuality have an obvious foothold. One simply *is*, essentially, either male or female, and concomitantly heterosexual or homosexual, depending on the relation of sexual object choice to biological sex. This schema, while in some moments resistant to any crossing of categories, simultaneously creates conditions of possibility for transsexuality understood as a biological or pathological phenomenon.

If Raymond would agree with this synopsis, then she would have to concur that the history of race and its negotiation by individuals are significantly different. The category of "race" carries with it a (racist) biological baggage that gives related meaning to medical interventions: race, in one (misguided) part of the popular imagination, is a *natural* category that adheres to bodies rather than history; thus changing one's body can change one's race (or the *perception* of one's race—the same thing, or not, depending how you think). However, a (differently racist) discourse understands race as a *superficial* aspect of identity: "we're all the same underneath." If we are, in some sense, "all the same" (where "same" is coded "white"), then "transracialism" makes no sense. This latter humanist position has more of a grip on our thinking about race, I would argue, than it does in the case of gender. Furthermore, race has an ambivalent relationship to dichotomy: while the politics of race often does operate to reduce racial conflict to "black versus white," especially in U.S. contexts, dominant racial taxonomies all admit of several racial groups. Thus it is less clear what a transracial would cross between; there is more than one permutation.

Working out the analogies and disanalogies between "transsexualism" and "transracialism" is therefore going to require more than an assertion that the former exists while the latter does not, when this is itself arguable. An even less plausible contention is that transsexuals' participation in the institution of transsexuality is evidence of their political naiveté and gender bad faith, while people of color (would) consciously and univocally resist "transracialism" because they are politically savvy to its actual (or potential) role in maintaining racism. What do transsexuals of color do on this model, I wonder? Raymond's transsexual is decisively coded as white, precluding the possibility of a "double consciousness" within which these paradoxically divergent understandings of race and gender are potentially available to the transsexual (not just to the nontranssexual critic). Thus Raymond's critique of medicalization, while accurately reflecting many of the conservative requirements imposed on transsexual "patients," singles out transsexuals as uniquely implicated in politically regressive ideologies. This analysis leaves no space for recognition of the discontinuity between the expectations of non-trans medical practitioners and transsexuals themselves, and indeed for the very possibility of a feminist transsexual.

The picture of transsexuality I have been criticizing might seem like a throwback to the headier days of second-wave feminism, when women were women and generalizations were unqualified. But part of my argument is that this picture persists into recent interpretations of transgender identities, even when the explicit theoretical paradigm is not lesbian feminist. In

*Changing Sex*, for example, Bernice Hausman offers a Foucauldian genealogy of transsexuality; while we might hope that a constructionist historical analysis would be less likely to project negative moral qualities onto contemporary subjects without appreciating the complexity of their locations, Hausman reaches conclusions quite similar to Raymond's.

Hausman's primary thesis is "that the development of certain medical technologies made the advent of transsexualism possible" (1995, 7). She finds the conditions of possibility for the transsexual subject in a genealogy that grants "to the technology a relative autonomy from what are known as gender ideologies" (1995, 14, 117). I do not have space here to argue with Hausman's historical scholarship on the emergence of medical-technological discourses. While we might debate the causal mechanisms she identifies, I think she does show that the emergence of sexological discourse and, crucially, a supportive technological base for effecting SRS were key conditions of possibility for contemporary transsexual identity as a medicalized phenomenon.

However, like Raymond, Hausman explicitly disavows the possibility of trans subjects who challenge the epistemic priority of technological intervention mediated by medical professionals. The acting subject is subservient to emergent technology in her analysis:

By demanding technological intervention to "change sex," transsexuals demonstrate that their relationship to technology is a dependent one. Ostensibly, the demand for sex change represents the desperation of the transsexual condition: after all, who but a suffering individual would voluntarily request such severe physical transformation? Yet it is through this demand that the subject presents him/herself to the doctor as a transsexual subject; the demand for sex change is an enunciation that designates a desired action and identifies the speaker as the appropriate subject of that action. Demanding sex change is therefore part of what constructs the subject as a transsexual: it is the mechanism through which transsexuals come to identify themselves under the sign of transsexualism and construct themselves as its subjects. (Hausman 1995, 110)

Although much of her scholarship is based on the history of sexology, Hausman is also interested in what contemporary transsexuals have to say about this process. In a chapter devoted to transsexual autobiography, she first takes up Sandy Stone's "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto," a well-known call to arms by and on behalf of radical transsexuals. Hausman endorses most of Stone's political aspirations, including

the desire to destabilize the official history of transsexuality and to offer dissident transsexual autobiographies that resist the allure of essentialism and passing (Hausman 1995, 143–45). However, Hausman also introduces a circularity that makes these goals impossible to meet. She suggests that Stone's overall goal is to liberate "suppressed stories, the 'truth' of the transsexual experience," and that, in the service of this goal, Stone represents "the power at work—the force that produces transsexual autobiography as singular and monolithic—as entirely repressive and negative, without any enabling function" (Hausman 1995, 146). This is a very odd interpretation of a text that professes a commitment to "constituting transsexuals as a *genre*—a set of embodied texts whose potential for *productive* disruption of structured sexualities and spectra of desire has yet to be explored" (Stone 1991, 296; emphases in original). I read Stone's allusions to "authentic experience" or "a true, effective and representational counterdiscourse" (1991, 295) as more literal calls to stop participating in the denials that conformity to clinical protocols requires. Stone is not suggesting that transsexual narratives have a univocal authenticity that has yet to be articulated but rather that whatever transgressive possibilities transsexuality might afford will not be generated by lying about basic aspects of one's lived experience (e.g., the fact that one was raised as a boy even though one currently lives as a woman).

Driving a wedge between Stone's account and her own enables Hausman to make what she presents as a counterargument: "Another way to examine these autobiographies is to use a Foucauldian model to analyze the statements made in transsexual autobiographies and thereby to examine the forms of subjectivity and experience made possible by these statements. This approach would enable us to gauge the ways in which transsexual autobiographies function as enabling—and not merely repressive—narratives" (1995, 147). So far, so good. What Hausman does with this "Foucauldian model," however, is to read a number of popular testimonials as "closed texts" within which "alternate interpretations are at times suggested, but immediately foreclosed by the author": "For the reader interested in verifying his or her own gender confusions, these narratives provide ample opportunity for identification and mirroring. For a critical reader, on the other hand, the reading process can be confining, especially as the author makes blanket statements concerning sex, gender, and sexuality. The purpose of the narratives is to force the reader to comply with the author's experience" (156). For Hausman, this "interpretive foreclosure" is reiterated in the encounter between the would-be transsexual and the clinician (157). Her organizing thesis is that the trans subject must necessarily reiterate central tropes of autobiographical and



medical narratives of transsexuality in order to exist. For Hausman, the transsexual author is an agent *only* to the extent that she or he works to foreclose interpretations of her/his story as evidence of anything other than authentic "mistaken identity" requiring SRS.

The question, then, is what Hausman can make of the agency of transsexuals in authoring their own narratives. Her historical work not only describes the conditions of possibility for a certain articulation of transsexual identity but goes on to tautologically present the class of transsexuals as coterminous with those who uncritically accede to the terms of contemporary technological intervention. If technology overdetermines the transsexual, and the demand for medical-technological intervention overdetermines these "confining" personal narratives, then any conceptual space for resistance to the medical-technological complex has also been foreclosed. Thus Hausman suggests that transsexuals have agency only in their complicity: "By making their desired treatment absolutely clear, transsexuals encouraged a therapeutic response on the part of clinicians. In this way, transsexuals were actively engaged in defining their position within medical discourses" (1995, 129; see also 130). As Jay Prosser points out (referring to Hausman's quote from 156 above): "The 'critical reader' is set up in opposition to 'the reader interested in verifying his or her gender confusion' . . . Whereas the gender-confused use transsexual autobiography to verify their gender confusion, critical readers (presumably having no gender confusion to verify) apparently get to see through to the internal problematics of these texts: as if transsexuals were not critical thinkers and readers; indeed, as if one couldn't be a transsexual and a critic at the same time" (1998, 132). Thus in Hausman's reduction the transsexual is defined, tautologically, as the individual who accedes to the terms of the discourse that generated a particular subject position.

**(The same) feminists construct transgender (the same way)**

Having thus shown how both Raymond's and Hausman's analyses conspire to preclude agential resistance on the part of transsexuals, I want now to turn to their strikingly similar feminist analyses of the limitations of the contemporary trans liberation movement. Both authors anticipate the objection that their emphasis on the surgically (re)constructed transsexual obscures the multiplicity of transgendered lives, and both respond to trans critics articulating new narratives and political strategies. This rhetorical work is accomplished, in both cases, in relatively brief ripostes appended to larger analyses—in Raymond's case, in the "new introduction on transgender" discussed above, and in Hausman's, in a six-page epilogue

to *Changing Sex*. Both authors argue that their analyses need not change in the face of trans people who do not appear to fit. In these passages, we see how both authors' skepticism about the feminist implications of transsexuality is extended to transgender more broadly, thus dismissing transgender activism as irrelevant to feminist politics.

Throughout the main text of *The Transsexual Empire*, Raymond reduces "transsexual" to "seeking total sex reassignment surgery," which she takes to imply specific ideological commitments to essentialist and antifeminist understandings of gender. When it comes to "transgender," however, Raymond offers a capacious definition: "The term, transgender, covers preoperative and postoperative transsexuals, transvestites, drag queens, cross dressers, gays and lesbians, bisexuals, and straights who exhibit any kind of dress and/or behavior interpreted as 'transgressing' gender roles" (Raymond [1979] 1994, xxv). This definition enables Raymond to attack the more ephemeral and often less politicized performances of celebrities such as RuPaul and k. d. lang (being "shaved" by Cindy Crawford on the 1993 cover of *Vanity Fair*). She suggests that "the ideal of transgender is provocative. On a personal level, it allows for a continuum of gendered expression. On a political level, it never moves off this continuum to an existence in which gender is truly transcended. Its supposedly iconoclastic rebellion against traditional gender confinement is more style than substance" ([1979] 1994, xxxv). One might legitimately retort here that the personal *is* the political and that Raymond's point trades on a false dichotomy; however, a more charitable interpretation would have her arguing that popular representations of single acts are a poor substitute for collective action against gender norms. In fact, many trans activists agree and see themselves as part of a political movement working toward new legal, institutional, and cultural norms that do not embody compulsory, binary gender roles (e.g., Bornstein 1997; Wilchins 1997).

However, even when the form of transgender in question seems more overtly controversial and transgressive, Raymond still sees a necessarily misogynist politics: "It is interesting that, like transsexuals, the majority of transgenderists are men who, rather than transcending, i.e., dismantling and going beyond gender roles, seek to combine aspects of traditional femininity with traditional masculinity" ([1979] 1994, xxv). She provides no support for the empirical aspect of this claim, and in fact there is only very sketchy and largely anecdotal evidence about the proportions of genetic males and females who might be described as "transgendered," however defined (partly because these statistics are in rapid flux). Raymond is theoretically motivated to emphasize the role of genetic men by her

desire to safeguard the integrity of the category "woman-identified women." Genetic women who might plausibly be described as "trans" are explained within a binary gender system—albeit a critical feminist model. It is clearly a parallel oversimplification to insist on including any masculine woman in the category "trans," but whatever answers are offered to these methodological (and historical) questions need to make both problem and solution explicit (see Halberstam 1998). Even in her critique of *Stone Butch Blues* (Feinberg 1993), Raymond is critical of what she sees as the "politically disappointing" retreat of the protagonist, Jess, into "a long-suffering self-surrender to being *other*—not a woman who is a butch and not a woman who tries to pass as a man with the help of hormones and surgery, but a transgendered individual who identifies as simply 'other.' In fact, Jess's final transformation is *from being woman-identified to being other-identified*" (Raymond [1979] 1994, xxxii; emphases in original).

Jess's transgendered life seems as close as it is possible to get to surviving on a discursive fault line—psychologically and quite literally. Yet, as I have shown, Raymond is also disappointed with the inability of transgendered people to "transcend" gender roles and with transgendered practices that only "combine aspects of traditional femininity with traditional masculinity." As she herself asks rhetorically, "What good is a gender outlaw who is still abiding by the law of gender?" ([1979] 1994, xxxv). Some transgendered people are criticized for mixing still identifiably gendered aesthetics or behaviors and thus failing to "transcend" gender; some are criticized for failing to occupy a gender home (even when neither "woman" nor "man" seems welcoming). The hypothesis that transgender is antifeminist seems unfalsifiable, and one is left wondering if there could be *any* kind of trans life that would satisfy Raymond with its feminist credentials and contribution to social transformation. I suspect the answer to this is no, because Raymond's brand of feminism requires only one subject: the woman-identified woman. Indeed, Raymond famously states that "the problem of transsexualism would best be served by morally mandating it out of existence" ([1979] 1994, 178).

Hausman's critique of the trans movement is remarkably similar. Her epilogue briefly considers how to make sense of those transgendered people, including some transsexuals, who have started to publicly repudiate the conservative politics of transsexuality espoused by clinicians and popular media (1995, 195). In answer, Hausman discusses Kate Bornstein's *Gender Outlaw* (1995), arguing for the conclusion that "the contradictions that emerge from her arguments . . . demonstrate the extent to which the transgender movement bases its claims within the conventional

parameters of the gender identity paradigm rather than transgressing that paradigm, as it claims to do" (Hausman 1995, 197). This conclusion is supported with the premise that any attempt to proliferate genders (as Bornstein wants to do) will always relate back to the binary: "In Raymond's argument—and my own—one cannot 'escape' gender by switching roles or performances and thereby confuse the binary logic, because that logic defines the possibility of the switching in the first place. 'Transcending' gender (Raymond's words) involves a more critical project, as well as the possibility of unsettling the stability of those who see themselves as 'normally sexed'" (1995, 198). To support this claim, Hausman reiterates her argument that medicotechnological treatment is inseparable from all trans identities: "Transgenderism, even with limited technological intervention, usually involves hormone treatment, and taking hormones, even in small doses, is risky. Taking hormones in the dosages necessary to maintain the opposite sex's morphology is not something that should be done without proper medical treatment and supervision. To ignore these facts is to discount the significance of technological intervention on the body's tissue and function, which is precisely one goal of the transsexual—to forget or dismiss the technological intervention necessary to maintain his or her chosen sex" (200). In the passage just quoted, the object of discussion again slips from the transgendered individual seeking "limited technological intervention" to the transsexual who is ideologically dependent on denying that such intervention has occurred. Like Raymond, Hausman attributes to all trans people not just a pragmatic dependence on medical services but also a wholesale adoption of a particular diagnosis and its concomitant politics. In this context it is unclear what the "more critical project" Hausman alludes to could be. Certainly every attempt by a self-identified trans person to unsettle the stability of the normally sexed and gendered, or to articulate ways of being that exceed the binary logic, will risk rejection by Hausman as well as by Raymond.

### Trans liberation?

The rhetorical strategies of Raymond and Hausman thus inhibit community building by defining feminist transgender politics as an oxymoron. Non-trans feminists who are convinced by these arguments will not be motivated to explore alliances—indeed, they provide justifications for actively resisting transgender expression and inclusion. I now want to take up the second horn of the dilemma I identified at the beginning of the article and turn to trans feminist writing—specifically, Feinberg's *Trans Liberation*. In this text I identify an understanding of gender as a property

of individuals rather than relations that hampers the development of feminist community in which agents are held morally accountable for the consequences of their gender expression for others.

In the emerging genre of popular trans feminist polemic (as in much of popular feminist writing) the rhetorical emphasis is squarely on the right of individuals to express their gender as they choose or to engage in free gender play. Hausman's brief critique of Bornstein finds fault with the "liberal humanist" model of the self such claims imply, and, philosophically speaking, I concur that Bornstein risks eliding a number of concerns about the embeddedness of gendered subjects. However, I see gender voluntarism as playing an important rhetorical role for transgendered intellectuals. Until very recently, the public trans person was most often manipulated as a talk-show gimmick, sexual fetish, or tell-all sensationalist. These images are still there, but there is also now a genre of writing by feminist activists such as Stone (1991), Stryker (1994), Bornstein (1995, 1997), Wilchins (1997), and Feinberg (1998), who use both first-person narratives and polemical commentary on gender to motivate more critical understandings of what trans liberation might mean.<sup>16</sup> This is an emerging genre, and interpreting *Gender Outlaw* or *Read My Lips* as the final word in trans politics is rather like seeing *The Female Eunuch* or *The Beauty Myth* as the epitome of feminism—each text captures particular moments of a political movement, defends particular theses perhaps, but need not define the scope of critique or remedy.

Feinberg's work on trans liberation as a political movement "capable of fighting for justice" must be read against this background.<sup>17</sup> This movement, on Feinberg's account, includes "masculine females and feminine males, cross-dressers, transsexual men and women, intersexuals born on the anatomical sweep between female and male, gender-blenders, many other sex and gender-variant people, and our significant others" (1998, 5). Indeed, in the short "portraits" by other contributors, an impressively wide range of queer identities and stories inflected by class, race, and age are represented: from a male transvestite who became a full-time transgendered woman talking with her wife about their relationship, to a drag queen recalling New York street life and Stonewall, to a gay transman on the significance of his native heritage, to an intersexed activist discussing the emergence of the intersex movement. Feinberg never hesitates to draw parallels with the oppression of women, and his extensive connections to

<sup>16</sup> Two books that complicate this genre were published too late to be discussed in this essay, which was written in 2000. See Namaste 2000 and Haynes and McKenna 2001.

<sup>17</sup> An earlier version of this critique of Feinberg was first published in Haynes 2000b.

feminist activism are made explicit throughout his writing. His stated primary goal is to "refocus on defending the [gender] diversity in the world that already exists, and creating room for even more possibilities" (28), with a particular emphasis on rupturing the connection between sexed bodies and gender identities.

Despite the book's many virtues, there are interesting dissonances between Feinberg's analysis of trans oppression and his emphasis on freedom of individual self-expression: "Each person's expression of their gender or genders is their own and equally beautiful. To refer to anyone's gender expression as exaggerated is insulting and restricts gender freedom" (1998, 24). And, "since I don't accept negative judgments about my own gender articulation, I avoid judgments about others. People of all sexes have the right to explore femininity, masculinity—and the infinite variations between—without criticism or ridicule" (25). This freedom is characterized very much as a property of individuals, and the language of choice appears throughout the book in slogans such as, "every person should have the right to choose between pink or blue tinted gender categories, as well as all the other hues of the palette"; "These ideas of what a 'real' woman or man should be straightjacket the freedom of individual self-expression" (4). In certain contexts Feinberg's appeal for blanket tolerance of all and any gender expressions is appropriate. The notion of gender freedom he espouses speaks against both the crushing weight of the dominant culture's gender discipline and some of feminism's more doctrinaire moments: "There are no rights or wrongs in the ways people express their own gender style. No one's lipstick or flattop is hurting us. . . . Each person has the right to express their gender in any way that feels most comfortable" (53).

This approach, however, avoids important normative questions. In particular, the privilege of white bourgeois male masculinity is implicated in the cultural visibility of minority male masculinities, cultural disdain for femininity, and cultural intolerance and disgust directed against any gender "deviance." These social structures inform and support normative heterosexuality and white bourgeois patriarchy. Gender expression is thus not only an aesthetic choice about cosmetics or hairstyle, skirts or suits. It is also implicated in politically fraught behaviors, economic marginalization and exploitation, and political consciousness. So even if the aesthetic choices of individuals are not up for moral grabs (as I agree they should not be), "gender expression" must surely (on Feinberg's own account) occupy a normative terrain.

For example, many feminists have argued that misogynist violence is constitutive of certain kinds of masculinity, but it is hardly a form of gender

expression that Feinberg can condone. When ze discusses hir experience of police brutality against gay drag kings and drag queens, ze concludes: "I believe that we need to sharpen our view of how repression by the police, courts, and prisons, as well as all forms of racism and bigotry, operates as gears in the machinery of the economic and social system that governs our lives" (1998, 11). Such analysis should also include critique of the gender work accomplished by male police officers who assault gender-queers. Their self-expression may be deeply felt or essential to maintaining a gendered identity, but it clearly needs to be fought against. To express masculinity (no matter what one's birth sex) is often to despise femininity, just as to express femininity is often to implicate oneself in one's own oppression. With this problem in mind, I once asked Feinberg, "What's good about masculinity?" Ze referred in hir answer to the diversity of masculinities across and within time and place and to the freedom of individuals to express their gender without fear of reprisal. This is an important goal, but in posing the question I was thinking more of the ethical dilemmas faced by men who want to avoid participating in sexism (Kahane 1998). It is perhaps even more difficult to combine the demands of maintaining a public identity as a transman with a commitment to feminism (Hale 1998).

Feinberg thus seems to sidestep the ethical field into which one invariably stumbles when talking about the merits of various "gender expressions." This elision comes from hir willingness to treat gender as an *individual* matter rather than as a web of relations in ongoing tension and negotiation. It is not so clear that, as Feinberg likes to think, ending gender oppression will benefit everyone. Implicitly addressing hir non-trans readers, ze says: "All your life you've heard such dogma about what it means to be a 'real' woman or a 'real' man. And chances are you've choked on some of it" (1998, 3). The chances of this are far greater, however, if one is either a woman or a trans person; Feinberg does not acknowledge that far from "choking," there are many people who lap up gender ideology precisely because it supports their privilege. This refusal to pass judgment on others' choices contributes to the appeal of Feinberg's rhetoric throughout hir work, in the same way that Raymond's dogmatism detracts from hers. But it also sometimes evades hard political questions about who is damaged and privileged by configurations of gender that themselves need to be transformed, sometimes from within the subject's own political consciousness. In other words, Feinberg's approach here elides a crucial aspect of progressive gender politics: the demand that we change ourselves. No doubt ze would resist such a demand on the reasonable grounds that trans people have too often been forced to conform to damaging gender norms or been oppressively criticized—as I have

already shown—for having the “wrong” sort of consciousness. But this response does not allow for important political distinctions between progressive transformations of consciousness initiated from within marginalized communities and disciplining moves that attempt only to reinforce established divisions. Missing from this rhetoric is any rich account of the ethics of self-transformation, which would be informed by consideration of how specific gendered ways of being fit into a web of possibilities and repressions. Filling in this gap might mitigate some of the legitimate anxieties of non-trans feminists (including Raymond and Hausman) that transgender politics will be inattentive to the relations that hold stigmatized concepts of “woman” in place.

### **“Us and them”: Feminist solidarity and transgender**

Thus either feminists elide, with Feinberg, the ethical questions that are raised by self-fashioning in the context of gender relations, or, with Hausman and Raymond, we condemn any trans move as merely another iteration of oppressive norms. One important characteristic of the middle ground excluded by these positions is a relational, historicized model of the self that broadens the scope of Foucauldian analysis to encompass “technologies of the self”—“matrices of practical reason” that “permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves” (Foucault 1988, 18). In the case of trans identities, I have pointed out that these technologies are unusually literal, and the stakes are particularly high for subjects often denied any gender home unless they undertake them. Rather than treating transgender as a special case, however, we might see SRS as one technology of the self among many others implicated in gender identity and oppression.

How might non-trans feminists temper critique of trans identities without adopting a laissez-faire account of gender and while recognizing our own parallel struggles with identity? In the context of her critique of transgender politics, Hausman asks—supposedly rhetorically—“are subjects who change their sex in order to make their bodies ‘match’ some kind of internal experience of the self defined as gender really able to question the ‘system’ that so clearly demarcates their choices?” (1995, 199). It is not clear why the theoretical parameters of this question specifically limit the critical faculties of transsexuals. We might equally ask: “Are subjects who identify unquestioningly as ‘heterosexual’ in order to accommodate the demands of heteropatriarchy really able to question the



'system' that so clearly demarcates their choices?" Adopting a radical framework in which choice must be understood through the deep construction of subjects cannot apply only to the construction of transsexuals. The categories "women," "men," "lesbian," "gay," and "heterosexual" have their own histories that congeal in contemporary individuals, structuring consciousness and determining possibilities.<sup>18</sup>

To make this point more forcefully, imagine Q, a lesbian feminist who subscribes enthusiastically to the notion that her life constitutes a resistance to institutionalized heterosexuality, yet who in autobiographical moments resorts to the language of "I've always known I was a lesbian." Q recalls a childhood fraught with ambivalence and trauma: she had unrequited crushes on other girls, she experimented briefly and unsuccessfully with dating boys, and she agonized over imagining herself the married mother that her culture expected her to become. After years in the closet, trying to pass as heterosexual, she finally decided that she would "come out" and create a life as a lesbian. This caused her family a great deal of anguish, and many people tried to persuade her that sexuality was quite malleable, and in fact she could continue simply to pass as heterosexual. Q was well aware that she lived in a culture where "sexuality" is treated ahistorically and quasi-scientifically as a core ontological fact about individuals. As a devotee of Foucauldian feminism, she was convinced, by contrast, that "lesbian" is in fact a relatively recent category of being, created by economic change, urbanization, shifting kinship relations, and feminist social movement. This intellectual attitude, while it shaped her way of being in the world, nonetheless coexisted uneasily with her sense that things could not have been otherwise except at the cost of great anguish and self-deception.

Q's story bears a striking resemblance to the autobiographies of many trans people. Of course, just as there is a standard "coming out" story for gays and lesbians, so, as I have discussed, there is a set of tropes that define the genre of (transsexual) autobiography.<sup>19</sup> These tropes may well inspire post hoc interpretations. But just as non-trans feminists take seriously the experience of "growing up as a lesbian," so there is no less of

<sup>18</sup> When Foucault was asked whether he had any conviction one way or another on the distinction between innate predisposition to homosexual behavior and social conditioning, he replied "On this question I have absolutely nothing to say. 'No comment.'" He goes on to say that this is "not my problem" and "not really the object of my work" (1997, 142). I read Foucault not simply as demurring due to lack of expertise (as if the question had a correct answer that he did not know) but also as shifting the focus of political conversation, as I would like to, away from the allure of causal pictures.

<sup>19</sup> Martin 1988; Phelan 1993; Mason-Schrock 1996; Prosser 1998.

an onus to respect the testimony of those who describe early lives marked out by gender confusion and distress:

As our (modern Western) world is now, failure to conform to the norms of gender is socially stigmatizing to an unbearable extent: To be human just is to be male or female, a girl or a boy or a man or a woman. Those who cannot readily be classified by everyone they encounter are not only subject to physically violent assaults, but, perhaps even more wounding, are taken to be impossible to relate to humanly. . . . In such a world, boundary blurring carries psychic costs no one can be asked to pay, and the apparently conservative gender-boundary-preserving choices (surgical, hormonal, and behavioral) of many transsexuals have to be read in full appreciation of what the real options are. (Scheman 1997, 132–33)

It may well be the case that a larger institutional history creates those subjects, but that does not make their experience any less real or deeply felt on an individual level.

Raymond recognizes that denial is very deeply built into the structure of privilege and, hence, that people read as men are likely to underestimate the significance of their male privilege.<sup>20</sup> I have certainly seen transsexuals act in ways that I thought showed poor political judgment on matters of oppression and privilege, but I have seen lesbians misstep, too, and increasingly I have been impressed by the political commitment and sophistication of many trans activists. The politically resistant choices that trans people are making often do challenge the terms of medical practice, as well as the depoliticized queer aestheticism that some feminists find objectionable (Bolin 1994; Califia 1997, 221–44; Feinberg 1998). Many FTMs in particular refuse surgeries, especially lower-body surgeries. The cosmetic and functional inadequacy of phalloplastic techniques is undoubtedly a major element of this resistance (and a valid one: who wants a lousy outcome to their surgery?), but resistance is also motivated by the feminist recognition that the penis does not make the man (Devor 1998, 405–13; Cromwell 1999, 112–17, 138–40). Many MTF transsexuals are developing their own forms of feminist consciousness and expressing their politics by both refusing certain medical interventions and asserting their rights to transform medical requirements. For example, many MTFs who do not want to engage in penile-vaginal intercourse after SRS resist the

<sup>20</sup> Certainly in the literature on passing and on transgender there are numerous allusions to the shock of losing or gaining male privilege that was previously taken for granted or unknown.

heterosexist demand to excessively dilate or surgically extend their newly constructed vaginas, or even to have one constructed in the first place (Bornstein 1995, 15–19, 118–21). In general, it seems as though increased access to critical information about medical procedures, a growing political consciousness, and expanded community has caused those trans people who do seek medical services to be increasingly concerned with the *limits* of SRS as a route to an authentic identity.

I have shown that Hausman's and Raymond's claims that transsexual identity is overdetermined by its medicalization are, conceptually speaking, tautological and, empirically speaking, false. Rather, transgendered people face a complex set of choices about which, if any, medically managed changes to the body they want to make. At the very end of her book Hausman claims that "the transgenderist[']s . . . ingestion of hormones, or participation in other procedures such as plastic surgery, merit medical attention because of the inherent dangers of reconfiguring the body's tissues" (1995, 200). In a similar vein, Raymond states that "medicalized intervention produces harmful effects in the transsexual's body that negate bodily integrity, wholeness, and be-ing" ([1979] 1994, 18). Both critics are right that such interventions carry medical risks not yet fully understood, and one of the frustrations of much philosophy of the body is precisely that it treats flesh as infinitely malleable, bloodless, and acquiescent. Yet it is precisely those people who must grapple with the pros and cons—physically as well as politically—of hormone treatments and surgeries who are most aware of the trauma and risks of changing one's body. These pros and cons include consideration of how desperately uncomfortable, unsafe, or unhappy one would be without altering one's body. In making decisions about hormones, surgery, passing, and gender conformity, trans people—especially if they are feminists—face ethical and political dilemmas. These dilemmas, again, might be best understood as related to others faced by non-trans feminists. Much more can be said here, but I hope to show only that trans people face complex choices about if and how to modify their bodies, which they may approach with more or less information, political acumen, or psychic need. In this regard, genetic women who ponder the wisdom of breast implants, crash diets, or bodybuilding are hardly different.

### **Feminist solidarity after queer theory**

My feminist utopia definitely does not include rigid disciplining of dimorphic sex and gender categories, an enforced normative ideal body type, objectification, or abjection. In this I am joined by all of the authors

I have discussed in this article, and sharing these goals for me defines a potential for feminist solidarity. The approaches I have criticized may say more about non-trans feminists' failure to interrogate our own identities, and our comfort with our own gender, than they do about the realities of trans communities or political movements. Acknowledging this, I have argued, leads us toward the recognition of political common ground and thus to the question of how feminist alliances can be formed. Very different experiences and identities can motivate similar feminist goals, and the political zeitgeist is such that solidarity must, of necessity, start from the deep diversity of agents. As Naomi Scheman puts it, "The issue . . . is not who is or is not really whatever, but who can be counted on when they come for any one of us: the solid ground is not identity but loyalty and solidarity" (1997, 152–53). Solidarity will founder, however, if we detach ourselves from each other and our mutual implication in favor of a demand for individual freedom. If we are all individuals making normatively equal gender choices, then where is oppression? The answer to this question looks more complicated now, but, hopefully, more honest.

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## Family Matters: Fiction's Contribution to the Memory Wars

In the past thirty-five years, much criticism has been directed toward the therapeutic sensibility of North American culture. Sociologists Philip Rieff (1966), Richard Sennett (1974), and Christopher Lasch (1978), among others, have argued that the contemporary emphasis on self-discovery and personal growth destroys interest in public life and communal involvement and results in a mentality of victimization. Many writers have attributed the increase in self-absorption noted by these critics to the phenomenal growth of psychotherapy during this period.<sup>1</sup>

In the general debates over what some call a narcissistic culture, one sociologist, Anthony Giddens, stands out in opposing the pessimistic pronouncements of his contemporaries. Rather than lamenting the contemporary citizen's retreat from the public domain to a preoccupation with self, as Sennett and Lasch do, Giddens sees the current emphasis on self-actualization as a transitional stage toward a restructuring of social institutions. Therapy is but one aspect of modernity's reflexivity, a "methodology of life-planning," that is open to a wide range of responses from the individual participant (1991, 174–86). In fact, Giddens opposes the idea that the therapy industry is a monolithic entity. Many therapy programs exist, he points out, and, furthermore, each individual brings a unique quality to the way he or she selects, interprets, and even struggles against the ideas suggested by these therapies. What interests Giddens is the reciprocity between personal life planning and cultural conditions, what he calls "life politics." He explains that "life politics concerns political

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<sup>1</sup> The American Psychiatric Association grew from 10,000 members in 1959 to 34,000 in 1989, the American Psychological Association's population increased from 18,000 to 68,000 in roughly the same period (Dawes 1994, 12). For more on the growth of therapy, see London 1974 and Cushman 1995. For more recent criticism of therapy's influence on North American culture, see Rieff 1991; Kaminer 1992; and Greenberg 1994.



issues which flow from processes of self-actualization in post-traditional contexts, where globalizing influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realization influence global strategies" (1991, 214). Although Giddens insists that individuals have the power to select from a variety of models and the power to modify these models when constructing their own life narratives, he admits that the project of the self may become commodified (1991, 199). This kind of commodification, through self-help manuals, specific therapeutic practices, and well-publicized programs, became a cause for alarm during the past decade when the general uneasiness about the social ramifications of a therapeutic culture was channeled into a more focused debate over specific therapeutic practices.

When *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* (Armstrong 1978), *Father-Daughter Incest* (Herman 1981), *Thou Shalt Not Be Aware* (Miller 1984), and other works began calling public attention to the issue of child abuse, therapists responded by developing programs for patients who had been abused as children. Gaining momentum from the recovery movement, which had grown tremendously from its beginnings in Alcoholics Anonymous, and building on the studies of posttraumatic disorder in veterans, these programs for survivors of abuse spread. Soon, self-help manuals such as *The Courage to Heal* (Bass and Davis 1988), *Secret Survivors: Uncovering Incest and Its Aftereffects in Women* (Blume 1990), and *Repressed Memories: A Journey to Recovery from Sexual Abuse* (Fredrickson 1992) appeared on the market. As patients retrieved memories of abuse, the sensational nature of their stories often led to front-page coverage, a phenomenon that only increased when the survivors sought legal compensation. In 1992, those who stood accused of abuse, psychologists who distrusted the methods being practiced in these programs, and other interested parties formed the False Memory Syndrome Foundation and began disseminating their own views, following the same marketing strategies of their opponents. Frederick Crews (1994), Elizabeth Loftus and Katherine Ketcham (1994), and Richard Ofshe (Ofshe and Watters 1994) were some of the chief spokespersons for this side, which claimed that the memories of abuse were actually being concocted in therapy. The conflict that ensued between recovery advocates and their skeptics, dubbed by Crews (1995) as "the memory wars," was often cast, by its participants and the media, as a battle between the sexes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Loftus and Ketcham call our attention to the way in which the controversy has been staged as a "male vs. female, patriarchal vs. matriarchal battle in the war to end child abuse" (1994, 205). As a research scientist who studies memory, a chief spokesperson of the skeptics,

Although neither side of the recovered memory controversy was made up exclusively of one gender, several factors led to the perception that this was gender warfare. For the most part, the clinicians conducting therapy were female, and their critics, research psychologists, were male. The fact that the contemporary argument over repression and the veracity of events recalled during therapy is an extension of an older controversy taking place during Freud's time also added to the appearance of a gender divide. As presented by Jeffrey Masson (1984), Alice Miller (1984), and others, Freud's renunciation of the seduction theory amounted to his siding with patriarchal power against the stories of individual women. Then, too, the manuals published by recovery therapists in the late 1980s and early 1990s were directed largely to a female audience. Although some acknowledgment was made that men were also recovering traumatic childhood memories in therapy, their cases did not become the center of the controversy as did those cases in which female patients sought legal redress from their fathers. Finally, recovery supporters were often critical of a patriarchal system that had kept the issue of child abuse hidden, and critics of recovery therapy questioned its connection with a feminist political agenda.

If we look at this phenomenon through the lens that Giddens suggests, we can see that globalizing influences (media coverage of the child abuse issue, debates about the nature of repression, and the marketing of recovery programs and manuals) did intrude into individual processes of self-realization. At the same time, the reflexive projects conducted by individuals and the actions they chose to take as a result of their life planning also precipitated important social debates. Experts from a variety of disciplines began discussing the nature of memory; the efficacy of the therapeutic process, especially given the range of practices being marketed; the training and supervision of individual counselors; and the role of the legal system in regard to what happens in therapy. Already, these negotiations have resulted in a modification of questionable therapeutic practices, reversals of verdicts based only on testimony of recovered memories, and more general skepticism about the connection between memory and truth.<sup>8</sup> This phenomenon illustrates Giddens's point that "in forging their

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and a woman whose opponents have accused her of being a traitor to her gender, Loftus is in a particularly good position to notice this emphasis on the sexual divide

<sup>8</sup> In 1993, the American Psychiatric Association issued a warning that repressed memories revived during therapy could be false, and in 1996 the British Royal College of Psychiatrists' Working Group on Recovered Memories published guidelines for therapeutic practice (Brahams 2000). One of the most publicized convictions based on recovered memory testimony, that of George Franklin, was overturned in 1996. Six years earlier, Franklin had been found guilty for

self-identities, no matter how local their specific contexts of action, individuals contribute to and directly promote social influences that are global in their consequences and implications" (1991, 2).

The controversy about recovered memory is not over, by any means. First, both recovery advocates and their opponents are deeply entrenched in their positions. They both have much to lose professionally if proven wrong. Second, questions about therapeutic practice and memory are not the only issues at stake in this debate. Underlying all of the wrangling about memory, and perhaps responsible for the framing of this controversy in terms of gender, lie deep concerns about changing power dynamics within the family.<sup>4</sup>

Articles about the memory wars frequently mention the devastating effects that claims of abuse have had on individual families. In their personal testimonials, both survivors and those who have fallen victim to their accusations invoke an image of idyllic family life before either the abuse or the memory of it (for the survivors) or the accusation (for the accused) disrupted it. Recovery therapy supporters blame problems in the family on perpetrators of sexual abuse, and they justify the formation of alternative family units as a way for survivors to regain a secure environment similar to the one lost to them when they were abused. By contrast, those who have been accused, along with their spouses and children, attribute disruptions in family life not to their actions in the past or to the problems that led the accuser to seek therapy but to the noxious practices of recovery therapists and the insidious influence of recovery manuals such as *The Courage to Heal* (Bass and Davis 1988). For example, Mark Pendergrast, in speaking of this manual, claims that its authors, Ellen Bass and Laura Davis, "quite clearly want their readers to embark on a very painful journey. Only when all their fundamental assumptions are destroyed, when their family relationships lie in ruins, will they develop their identity as Survivors" (1995, 54). As a father who "lost" two of his daughters to this "movement," Pendergrast understandably brings a bias to his interpretation of *The Courage to Heal*, but he often misinterprets its authors' support for relationships that offer alternatives to abusive ones as an attack on the nuclear family and a strong encouragement for "women to become lesbians as part of the politically correct expression of Survivorship" (1995,

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the 1969 murder of Susan Nason. The verdict was based on the claim by Franklin's daughter Eileen that, twenty years after the fact, she had suddenly remembered the scene of her father molesting and killing her best friend (Ginsburg 1996, A1). For conflicting accounts of the original case, see Franklin and Wright 1991, MacLean 1993; and Terr 1994. For a thoughtful discussion of the legal ramifications of the court's decision, see Brooks 2000.

<sup>4</sup> See Sturken 1999, 232.

61).<sup>5</sup> The concern about a conspiracy of lesbian feminists bent on destroying the family fills many of the skeptics' arguments, as concerns about dysfunctional families and increasing instances of incest fill the warnings of the proponents of therapy. Neither side questions the fundamental necessity of a secure support system for psychic health, but they often differ in their opinions about what kind of "family" best promotes a feeling of security.

Lately, there has been much discussion, in a variety of arenas, about the future of the family as a social institution.<sup>6</sup> What interests me, as a literary critic, is the role that fiction plays in commenting on the issues raised during the memory wars, particularly those involving the family. Giddens sees therapy and the self-reflexive project it represents as a potentially positive aspect of modernity, one that contributes to a massive restructuring of established social institutions.<sup>7</sup> I view the offspring of therapy, the recovery novel, in an equally positive light. Fictional texts present a more balanced perspective on memory and therapy than has been previously acknowledged. More important, they address the underlying concerns about the family by providing much-needed criticism of traditional family structures, legitimizing alternative familial configurations, and often suggesting practical avenues for social reform.

Although participants in the recovered memory controversy refer to fictional works occasionally, they rarely provide an adequate analysis of this literature. Recovery supporters and their skeptics usually quote from novels as a means of supporting or refuting particular assumptions or as a way of legitimizing or adorning their publications.<sup>8</sup> For example, in *The Politics of Survivorship* (1996), Rosaria Champagne cites literary evidence in explaining the "aftereffects of incest" to support her prorecovery po-

<sup>5</sup> Despite the critics' claims to the contrary, there are no direct inducements to "become lesbian" in the manuals for survivors. Lesbian critics, in fact, have noted the general unwillingness of therapists and researchers to consider the link between experiences of abuse and sexual preference. See Cvetkovich 1995, 358.

<sup>6</sup> For representative arguments within the field of sociology, see Barrett and McIntosh 1982; Stacey 1990, 1996; and Weston 1991. For a documentary aimed at a general audience, see "All Kinds of Families," which aired on the Lifetime channel, January 22, 2001.

<sup>7</sup> In arguing against claims that a therapeutic society leads to narcissism and a retreat from public life, Giddens uses Judith Stacey's work on the family as evidence. Instead of retreating into "the bounded world of the self," individuals in Stacey's study, in the face of "the unravelling of traditional family patterns . . . are actively pioneering new social territory and constructing innovative forms of familial relation" (Giddens 1991, 176). As Giddens says, "Such restructurings are not merely local and they are certainly not trivial" (177).

<sup>8</sup> See Bass and Davis 1988, 158, Herman 1992, v, 52-53; Loftus and Ketcham 1994, 38; and Terr 1994, 13, 44, 55.

sition. On the other side, Pendergrast writes of Jane Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1992), "Perhaps most frightening, the dogma [of recovery has] flowed from popular self-help books to well-honed fiction that [presents] engaging, believable characters suddenly remembering abuse. . . . Good fiction can be more convincing than truth" (1995, 81).

The skeptics seem particularly wary of the power of literature to influence public opinion. Their alarm extends beyond the general appeal of the recovery narrative itself, which Crews notes in his now-famous report on the memory wars, published first in the *New York Review of Books* and then as a separate monograph: "The very idea of repression and its unraveling is an embryonic romance about a hidden mystery, an arduous journey, and a gratifyingly neat denouement that can ascribe our otherwise drab shortcomings and pains to deep necessity. When that romance is fleshed out by a gifted storyteller who also bears impressive credentials as an expert on the mind, most readers in our culture will be disinclined to put up intellectual resistance" (1994, 55). Skeptics also believe that plots of fictional texts occasionally become incorporated into the life narratives being constructed within therapies (Ofshe and Watters 1994, 92). Lawrence Wright (1994) makes a particularly convincing argument along these lines by pointing out the parallels between the plot of *Michelle Remembers* (Smith and Pazder 1980) and the memories reported in the Ingram case.<sup>9</sup>

I do not dispute the claims made by Pendergrast, Crews, and Wright that fiction can be influential. Certainly, the more outrageous claims that have come out of recovery therapy, such as stories of satanic abuse and alien abduction, may have their origin in fictional narratives circulating in our culture. But individual and social memories are influenced by much

<sup>9</sup> In 1988, Paul Ingram, a sheriff in Thurston County, Washington, was arrested for child abuse, based on the accusations of his two daughters. He confessed to the crime, even though he had no memory of it, because he trusted his daughters and because authorities convinced him that doing so would result in his remembering. As the investigation continued, the accusations and the accompanying confessions involving satanic ritual abuse became more and more bizarre, leading to the arrests of other members of the community. Eventually, lack of physical evidence, denials by the others accused, and the increasingly unbelievable nature of Ingram's confessions led some investigators to be skeptical about the daughters' claims. Although charges were dropped for everyone else, Ingram's initial admission of guilt resulted in his incarceration. Wright attributes the accusations and the confessions in this case to the suggestible and fantasy-prone nature of the individuals involved, to the influence of their fundamentalist faith and their trust in the expertise of therapists, and to the television specials and books on satanic cults that they had viewed and read (1993, 54-76).

more than a single text.<sup>10</sup> All of the narratives in circulation, the texts disseminated by both sides of the recovery debate, the media's coverage of the controversy, and the fiction that speaks to these issues, work together in shaping individual and cultural beliefs. Just as the nonfictional texts represent a variety of views, so do those fictional narratives that have as their basis the therapeutic paradigm.<sup>11</sup>

### Literary representations of memory

In what I have designated as the *recovery novel*, a middle-aged protagonist goes through an essentially therapeutic process, with or without the presence of an analyst, retrieving long-buried memories and using them to construct a life story that explains, in part, the character's present circumstances. The popularity of this plot began in the 1980s and continues to grow, spanning the realms of low, middle, and high culture and appearing in a variety of genres. Some examples of novels that follow this plot structure include Judith Rossner's *August* (1983), Pat Conroy's *The Prince of Tides* (1986), Gordon Lish's *Peru: A Novel* (1986), Margaret Atwood's *Cat's Eye* (1988), Barbara Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams* (1990), Dennis McFarland's *The Music Room* (1990) and *School for the Blind* (1994), Stephen King's *Gerald's Game* (1992), Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* (1992), Peter Straub's *The Throat* (1993), Tim O'Brien's *In the Lake of the Woods* (1994), Ntozake Shange's *Liliane* (1994), Nicola Griffith's *Slow River* (1995), Jonathan Kellerman's *Self-Defense* (1995), and Marion Zimmer Bradley's *Exile's Song: A Novel of Darkover* (1996). The fact that this plot structure can be found in a variety of genres—science fiction, fantasy, horror, detective and crime stories, and realistic fiction—shows the pervasive influence of psychotherapeutic discourse in North American literature.

In all of these works, a protagonist, portrayed as an alienated, depressed individual at the beginning of the narrative, returns to the scenes of the past, either through a physical or a psychic journey, and confronts trau-

<sup>10</sup> According to Maunice Halbwachs, author of *On Collective Memory* (1992), "any memories capable of being formed, retained, or articulated by an individual are always a function of socially constituted forms, narratives, and relations," and, conversely, "social memory is always open to revision by individual memory" (Crewe 1999, 75).

<sup>11</sup> Elaine Showalter approaches the recovered memory controversy from a different angle than I, reading the whole phenomenon as an example of mass hysteria. Still, she acknowledges the dual role that fiction takes. On one hand, she joins the skeptics in lamenting the way that novels and movies reproduce the recovered memory plots and spread the hysteria, but she also admits that "the hysterical narrative of fiction can tell us a lot more about the causes and cures of hysteria than most of the self-help books on the market" (1997, 99, 158).

matic memories that may have remained unexplored for many years. Through what is depicted as a slow and painful process of investigating the past, retrieving memories in disconnected fragments, these characters are usually able to construct a narrative of their lives that explains their present emotional instability. The plots of these novels rely on temporal discontinuity—moving between the present, in which the protagonists are often journeying to their homes or in some way are encountering stimuli that remind them of the past, and relived memories of past events. This alternation between present and past action reveals the struggle of the protagonist in facing earlier traumas, but it also encourages readers to move forward in the text in their desire to solve the mystery and to see the protagonist healed.<sup>12</sup>

Interestingly, given the primary focus in the media on female patients uncovering memories of sexual abuse, recovery novels published during the past two decades represent both genders uncovering a wide array of traumatic events, not just scenes of incest. In this way, the recovery genre as a whole works against the notion that the reflexive project of the self is geared only to women, as may be communicated through the marketing of many recovery programs and manuals. Likewise, fictional texts also work against the notion that only women are victims, either of therapy or of abuse, a concept that may be inferred from some of the more cynical diatribes of the critics. Instead of eliding the differences in degree of suffering by collapsing all traumas into one category, as some recovery programs have been accused of doing, the novels, by necessity, present individual life narratives on a case-by-case basis.

Critics are correct in saying that some recovery novels depict questionable therapeutic practices and, in so doing, mislead the reader about the way that memory functions. For example, Wally Lamb's *She's Come Undone* (1992), an Oprah Winfrey Book Club selection, presents hypnosis as a legitimate method of investigating the past and healing emotional trauma. The psychologist's promise to his client, that "together, we are

<sup>12</sup> Exploration of individual subjectivity and personal relationships has been the focus of the novel since its inception, at least the strand of this genre originated by Samuel Richardson and Daniel Defoe (Watt 1957, 176–77, 280). That the therapeutic paradigm, so much a part of contemporary culture, would influence the structure of contemporary novels is not surprising, given that therapists and novelists share a similar goal: delving into the human psyche. What is surprising is that the appearance of this plot structure within the work of so many radically different writers has generated so little critical attention. A few of the books I am discussing have been the subjects of extensive analysis as individual texts, but the recovery narrative, in the way I am defining it as a generic classification, has not received much critical notice.

going to rewind your childhood and record over it" (1992, 234), even incorporates a metaphor that critics deplore, for the mind does not function like a tape recorder.

Depictions of memory in Kellerman's *Self-Defense* and Smiley's *A Thousand Acres* also seem troublesome. The protagonists of both novels are portrayed as completely repressing traumatic scenes from childhood until an experience in their adult lives reminds them of the event. In Kellerman's work, Lucy is first alerted to this repressed memory through her dreams. With the help of hypnosis, she is able to recall the murder that she witnessed as a child, her dreams providing enough information, despite the passage of years, to enable her to lead authorities to the victim's grave. In *A Thousand Acres*, Ginny's visit to her childhood home occasions a flashback to her experience of being molested. This return of the repressed memory occurs only after her sister, Rose, reveals her own status as an incest survivor and claims to have observed their father entering Ginny's bedroom at night when they were children. The element of suggestion provided by Rose's accusation, the sudden flood of memory, and the change in perspective that the "abuse excuse" gives Ginny in accounting for unhealthy family dynamics and her own sexual behavior would make critics of recovery suspicious were these features present in a real-life situation.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, the idea that dreams reproduce scenes from the past in accurate detail is an alarming distortion of psychoanalytic theory.

The more objectionable aspects of texts by Lamb, Kellerman, and Smiley do not appear with regularity in the recovery genre. Because dream, fantasy, and memory are conflated within most plots, obscuring the line between what the character has invented and what has happened in the past, these novels at least suggest the difficulty of reconstructing an accurate life history even as they depict a protagonist attempting to do so. Complete repression followed by a sudden flood of memory is rare, for the narrative itself is built around the protagonist's gradual reconstruction of a life story based on fragments of memory already at the protagonist's disposal. In most cases, the main character remembers something about the key scene, so that the act of recovery involves filling in existing gaps with the help of testimony from others, a personal investigation into artifacts of family history, or sheer supposition. Outside confirmation about a protagonist's reconstructed memory often resolves his or her uncertainty. This confirmation can come directly, through the confession of the party involved (*The Music Room*), through the testimony of someone who witnessed the traumatic scene (*August*), or through someone who was aware

<sup>18</sup> The term *abuse excuse* comes from Denbowitz 1994.



of the trauma's taking place, though not actually a witness to it (*Slow River*). Many times, the repression that is represented in these texts involves a character's not wanting to face the emotions caused by a traumatic memory rather than the complete erasure of that memory from the protagonist's consciousness. Scenes that may have confused or upset a character during childhood are imaginatively recreated so that the adult character can reevaluate them from a more mature perspective.

Even texts with questionable portrayals of memory, like those by Kellerman and Smiley, may contain elements that mitigate the potentially harmful effects of these inaccuracies. The scenario in Kellerman's novel resembles the Eileen Franklin case, which served as the focus for debates over the validity of repressed memory. The adult woman, in both situations, reminded of repressed scenes by her immediate circumstances, uncovers memories that implicate her father in an unsolved murder. Almost as if to guard against the assumptions that were made about memory in the Franklin case, Kellerman allows his character to pursue legal action only after her recollections have been confirmed by outside sources and after more substantial physical evidence and the perpetrator's confession have been obtained. Although Lucy's dreams turn out to provide important clues to the murder, Kellerman provides many warnings, through the psychologist in the narrative, that memories reconstructed through hypnosis may be inaccurate. In fact, in an earlier novel, *Silent Partner* (1989), Kellerman actually features a protagonist who manipulates tales of childhood trauma for personal gain.

Although Smiley ignores the possibility that Ginny's memory of incest could have been falsely constructed, she does have Ginny question the accuracy of her recall about other events in the story, admitting that a made-up detail could have "inserted itself into these memories" (1992, 178). More important, the therapeutic process that Ginny goes through in this novel ultimately leads her not to protest her innocence, not to place complete responsibility for her problems on her abuser, but to recognize the similarities between her father's actions and her own. In seeing the parallel between her father's incestuous behavior and her own attempt to kill her sister, Ginny realizes that she, too, has felt "the goad of an unthinkable urge," an insight that she "safeguard[s] above all others" (1992, 370-71).

Contradictory notions about the function of memory sometimes appear within a single text. Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams* provides a good example of a recovery novel that satisfies the reader's need for closure by unraveling the complex threads of the protagonist's past but that at the same time suggests that memories are not always reliable. In this novel, when Codi

Noline returns to her hometown to care for her ailing father, she claims to recall very little of her childhood. Of the fragments she does possess, several memories seem impossible, either because they incorporate mythic figures or because Codi has been told that she was not present at certain events. Through this combination of plausible and implausible recollections, Kingsolver at first appears to suggest that memory can be a product of the imagination, influenced by the stories an individual has been told and manipulated by his or her desires and expectations. In fact, she has Codi muse, "Memory is a complicated thing, a relative to truth but not its twin" (1990, 48).

The initial skepticism presented in this novel is undermined, to some extent, by the plot itself. By gathering information from her father, her sister, and others who knew her as a child, Codi is able to account for all the confusing images that have haunted her. Her memory of seeing her mother's body being taken away by a helicopter proves accurate, for Codi is told that she was present at that scene, though most of the family was unaware of this fact. Even the mythic elements of Codi's dreams make sense when interpreted metaphorically. Codi's experience suggests that the truth of the past can be determined, no matter how much detail may be forgotten or repressed. In fact, one character tells Codi that "if you remember something, then it's true. . . . In the long run, that's what you've got" (1990, 342).

Kingsolver counters the concept of memory established through her carefully constructed plot, however, by linking the process of remembering to artistic creation and by making frequent references to distorted memories. Codi's father, Homer, is a photographer, known for his production of images "that didn't look like what they actually were" (1990, 69). Clouds appear to be animals, cacti resemble hands, and men seem to be stone formations. To produce these effects, Homer uses a dodging tool to erase details of the original scene as he processes the print in the darkroom. Kingsolver explicitly links Homer's hobby with the act of remembering: "All his photographs begin in his memory. That is the point. He might be the only man on earth who can photograph the past" (148). With this link established, Homer's technique of dodging takes on added significance, for it mimics the act of repression. Homer's photographs are a visual image of the way that memories can appear real but actually are distorted versions of the original events. The fact that Homer suffers from Alzheimer's also helps Kingsolver stress how unreliable memory can be. His conflation of people and events from different times in his life forcefully illustrates the way that the past constantly impinges on the present for all the characters, but it also reveals the essentially fragile nature of

human memory, a warning to those who accept memory alone as a testament to the truth of the past.

Not all recovery novelists tie up the loose ends of the narrative as Kingsolver does. In Lish's *Peru*, for example, there is no clear demarcation between what the protagonist has imagined and what is real. In much of the monologue that comprises this novel, the narrator, Gordon, attempts to draw connections between a hostage situation in Peru, which he saw televised but without sound; a recent incident in which he injured his head while putting his luggage in a taxi; and his memory of murdering Steve Adinoff in the sandbox when they were both children. The experience with the taxi, he says, has turned him "looking rearward for keeps" (1986, 150), and the Peruvian telecast has ensured that he will see "nothing else" (195) but the scene in the sandbox. Yet very little about the scene from childhood becomes clear during the narrative because Gordon's confusion about the past increases as he rambles. At one point, he asks, "Who wants to remember the way things really were? You have to really think about it and think about it to keep the things which happened from getting mixed up with the things you're always making up" (107). Gordon's accounts of his actions as a child seem as speculative, as uncertain, and as unreliable as the scenarios he invents for the televised sequence. Gordon remains hopelessly mired in an obsessive review of past traumas, unable to form a coherent life narrative that will help him understand his present state and thus end his replaying of past scenes (Jones 1987, 504).

When the whole range of fictional texts that have as their core the therapeutic process becomes the focus of study, not just isolated texts, the depictions of memory and of therapy seem quite varied. In each of these works, the protagonist is constructing a life narrative, participating in what Giddens calls the reflexive project of the self; so on one level, these novels do reinforce the therapeutic model. While some of these texts may suggest erroneous views of memory or replicate questionable therapeutic practices, the range of representations found in this genre shows that fictional narratives are functioning in the same way as the recovered memory debates. Both venues present opposing views, allowing a culture to reflect on and perhaps begin to revise current beliefs and practices.<sup>14</sup> The most important

<sup>14</sup> Giddens's concept of institutional reflexivity provides a useful reference point at this stage of my argument. Giddens believes that modern social institutions like the family are dynamic and as such are susceptible "to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge" (1991, 20). Part of what shapes that knowledge and in turn can influence the direction of change, I would argue, comes in the form of narratives that circulate in the

service fictional recovery texts perform, however, is in exploring the dynamics of the family unit more thoroughly than has been possible in the nonfiction accounts published during the memory wars.

### Family matters

In the exchanges taking place between survivors and their families, emotion and contrasting perspectives of the past often get in the way of constructive analysis. Those who comment on the controversy also often ignore the complex factors that lead to familial breakdown, for in pursuing their own agendas, these writers tend to look for scapegoats, demonizing the individuals they hold responsible for destroying the idyllic realm of the child. Nostalgia characterizes the rhetoric of both sides as they make predictions about what will happen to the family if the behavior of the opposition goes unchecked. Such nostalgia leads people "to take refuge in an idealized past while avoiding a critical examination and engagement with their present" (Spitzer 1999, 91).

Novelists, by contrast, through their portrayal of the flawed family of the protagonist's childhood, question the assumption, made by many "profamily" advocates, that the traditional nuclear family provides the best environment for its members. In novels portraying protagonists suffering from childhood trauma, the family of origin is usually implicated in one of the following ways: for being abusive, for withholding emotional support, or for failing to protect the child from dangers lying outside the family confines. By depicting a variety of problems within the domestic sphere, recovery narratives react against earlier cultural representations of the home as an idyllic space. It is not so much the makeup of this family that is under attack but, rather, its hierarchy, its prescribed division of labor, its insularity, and its weakness in withstanding threats posed by larger social problems.

The most blatant attack on idealized family life occurs in plots that feature scenes of domestic abuse. Whether it be a case of emotional cruelty (*In the Lake of the Woods*), physical violence (*The Throat*), or incest (*A Thousand Acres*), most often the adult who threatens or harms the protagonist is a parent or a parental figure, clearly in a position of authority. Since most childhood scenes take place in a time when the nuclear family was most prominent, this authoritarian figure is usually male—hence, the accusations of male bashing directed toward many of these texts. However,

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culture. What people read becomes part of the information they use in life planning, and that life planning, in turn, can affect social institutions like the family.

recovery narratives are not simply vilifying a particular gender. Instead, they are presenting a more complex criticism of the power structure that governs relationships inside and outside the family, a point made clear by feminist readings of Atwood's *Cat's Eye*, King's *Gerald's Game*, and Smiley's *A Thousand Acres*.<sup>18</sup>

Atwood, King, and Smiley invite the reader to see connections between systemic hierarchies of power and domestic child abuse through parallels that they establish between social issues and their protagonist's personal experience. For example, Atwood's child protagonist sees her own victimization at the hands of her peers paralleled in the experiences of three adults, Mrs. Finestien, Miss Stuart, and Mr. Banerji, whose religious, national, and ethnic affiliations, respectively, place them outside the dominant culture. In *A Thousand Acres*, Smiley equates the patriarch's dominion over and pollution of the land with the power Ginny's father assumes over his own family when he commits incest. Not all recovery novels are so blatant in their critique of the larger social system, though. An examination of an anomaly in the genre, a lesbian science fiction novel with a futuristic setting, reveals more clearly the link between the personal and the political spheres that is part of the recovery structure itself.

In the twenty-first century society that Griffith imagines in *Slow River*, feminist and gay movements have presumably achieved their goals: men and women have equal access to power, and characters are free to express their sexual orientation without drawing notice from others. In such a world where gender and sexual equality are the norm, Griffith seems to argue, the potential for using sex as a means of exercising power is the same for women as for men. This point is driven home by the way that Griffith causes suspicion to be cast on Lore's father, Oster, throughout most of the plot. The reader, whose views are shaped by a contemporary heterosexual, patriarchal society, assumes that Oster has abused or attempted to abuse each of his daughters. In order to maintain this assumption, the reader must ignore mounting evidence incriminating the mother, Katerine, who is depicted as much more interested in wielding power than her husband.

Like her male counterparts in recovery novels with contemporary settings, Katerine dominates others both in the professional realm and in the domestic sphere. By depicting Katerine, the head of the van de Oest

<sup>18</sup> For discussions of Atwood, see Ahern 1993; Hite 1995, and Deery 1997; for an insightful discussion of King, see Thompson 1998; and for discussions of Smiley, see Keppel 1995, Carden 1997, Schiff 1998, Levin 1999, Malmgren 1999; Mathieson 1999; Strehle 2000

biochemical empire, as the one guilty of sexually molesting her daughters, Griffith shows that the need for control, for dominance, is not a matter of biological predisposition but depends on individual inclination in a society in which genders are equal. Thus, Griffith provides a cautionary tale for feminists and essentialists alike. Women cannot be presumed to be more nurturing and more concerned with the feelings and needs of others. At the same time, when women take on traditionally masculine traits in response to the demands of the business world, thus becoming more aggressive and competitive, there may be negative ramifications for the society as a whole.

In all recovery plots, abusers use their power and authority to intimidate their victims and to prevent other family members from questioning their behavior. In McFarland's *School for the Blind*, for instance, Muriel's mother and brother stand outside the bedroom, too frightened to intervene, as her father molests her (1994, 193). Frequently, family members in these plots turn their backs on the abuse because they do not have the power to overrule the patriarch or because they fear that the family will appear less than perfect to the often judgmental outside world.

The abuser is protected within the walls of his home because of his authoritarian position, but what protects him from the censure of the rest of society is the insular nature of the traditional family. As protagonists reconstruct their pasts, they often find that neighbors and extended kin were aware of the abuse but were unable or unwilling to intervene. In Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* (1993), the whole Newfoundland community knew that Quoyle's father, as a boy, had impregnated his sister. Long after the fact, a cousin tells Quoyle the story of his aunt coming for an abortion after she was made pregnant by her brother, who "as at 'er from when she was a little maid" (297). Yet, because of the assumption that what happens in a household is a private matter, not to be questioned by those outside that space, other characters, no matter how suspicious they may be, are portrayed as not interfering with the affairs of the traditional family. Both those within and outside the domestic sphere, wishing to hold on to ideal images of what a family is supposed to be, ignore evidence to the contrary.

The point of view from which most recovery stories are narrated further accents the family's insularity. When protagonists are describing childhood events, their visions only encompass what they were able to perceive at that age. Therefore, these scenes are usually more circumscribed than others, with the immediate family members looming large. As in Griffith's *Slow River*, the social conditions that influence domestic interaction may become apparent elsewhere in the narrative, but the scenes from child-

hood, especially those in which the abuse occurs, stress only the interchanges among the family members within the privacy of their home. To the child, the hierarchy of power within this restricted world goes without question.

Recovery novelists emphasize the connection between power and abuse most notably in the way that they present the protagonist, as an adult, overcoming the hierarchy by standing up against an oppressor or a symbolic substitute. As a part of the recovery process, this confrontation allows the protagonist to assert his or her own worth rather than continuing to be a victim, as the novels of Kellerman and King illustrate. At the end of Kellerman's *Self-Defense*, Lucy takes the authorities to her father's property to search for the body she remembers him burying there. Lowell, who has just told his daughter, "you're nothing" (1989, 432), and who orders her to sit down, remains, as an invalid, impotent to stop her. His eyes are described as "bottomless and terrified" (434) as Lucy leaves, determined more than ever to expose her father's guilt. In response to warnings that her father is a dangerous man to oppose, she says, "He won't do *anything*. He doesn't *do* anything, he just talks—that's his game, talk, talk, talk. . . . He's *nothing*" (436).

In King's *Gerald's Game*, the protagonist, Jessie, confronts a symbolic substitute for her father, the prisoner Joubert, thus asserting her power over two men who dominated her at times when she was most vulnerable. Handcuffed to a bed in a remote cabin, Jessie spends most of the novel plagued not only by the memories of her father molesting her during the 1963 eclipse but also by the nightly visits of a monstrous figure. Although the male authorities who rescue Jessie initially dismiss her story as a sign of hysteria, the eventual arrest of Joubert, a grave-robbing, flesh-eating necrophiliac, proves that the figure she equated with her father's ghost was not a hallucination.<sup>16</sup> Jessie insists on attending Joubert's trial. When she refers to her immobility in the courtroom, caused by his loathsome stare, as the "final eclipse" (1992, 440), the link between her father and this "monster" is strengthened. Jessie takes off her veil, approaches the defendant, and demands that he acknowledge her presence. His response, delivered in "a reedy, whining voice, the voice of an insane child" (440), operates on two different levels. On the one hand, "I don't think you're *anyone*!" (440) is Joubert's mimicry of the imprisoned, frightened Jessie.

<sup>16</sup> Obviously, King is taking a feminist stance in reference to the current controversy. Women's stories are often not believed by male authorities, though they may, even in cases of recovered memory, contain some kernels of truth. Both *Gerald's Game* (1992) and its companion piece, *Dolores Claiborne* (1993), are dedicated to women in King's family.

On the other hand, the words also represent both Joubert's and Jessie's father's assessment of her. Both figures preyed on Jessie when she was powerless, deeming the satisfaction of their own desires as more important than the effect of their actions.<sup>17</sup> In response, the now-strengthened Jessie refuses to "give it [Joubert] the satisfaction" (442) of thus dismissing her, and she spits in Joubert's face, an action she describes as "something that would matter, that would make a difference, that would show me that no eclipse lasts forever" (442). Jessie, like Lucy, refuses to accept the judgment that she has no worth, a judgment made implicit by the original act of abuse. Instead, each woman shows through her words and actions that her oppressor has lost his power to dominate. He has become "nothing" in her eyes.<sup>18</sup>

By portraying the adult protagonist as having to face his or her oppressor on equal terms in order to recover from childhood trauma, these narratives emphasize the fundamental imbalance of power that characterized the original relationship. Whether or not such confrontation scenes are part of the plot, most protagonists who have been abused as children stress their own sense of powerlessness and isolation at the time that the abuse took place. Thus, recovery novelists make the following point: children, who are at the bottom of the power structure within the traditional family, are too vulnerable under the present system. Because the family, like the larger society on which it is patterned, is hierarchical, members in positions of authority are often able to exert their will without having to answer for their behavior. Subordinates within the family may be too weak or frightened to object, and institutional authorities outside the family may remain ignorant of the abuse because of the insular nature of this social unit.

In narratives in which protagonists suffer from inadequate emotional support, the criticism of the family takes a different form. Rather than putting the spotlight on abusive authority figures, these stories highlight the traditional role of the mother. The mother's absence, resulting either from divorce, as in Shange's *Liliane*, or from her death, as in Kingsolver's *Animal Dreams*, precipitates the protagonist's feelings of abandonment. Literary critic Maureen Ryan, accusing Kingsolver of having a conservative

<sup>17</sup> Jessie's husband, Gerald, provides yet another example of this dynamic. After handcuffing her to the bed to fulfill his sexual fantasy, Gerald ignores Jessie's request to stop the game, thus precipitating her kick to his groin, his death, and her ordeal in the cabin.

<sup>18</sup> The image of the protagonist symbolically reversing the power differential that exists between the abuser and the victim can sometimes be amusingly grotesque, as in *The Shipping News*. Quoye's aunt takes the ashes of the brother who abused her, dumps them down the hole in the outhouse, and urinates on them!



agenda, argues that her glorification of motherhood undercuts her "apparent appreciation for non-traditional families" (1995, 81). While I agree that Kingsolver shows "unrelenting admiration for mothers" (Ryan 1995, 81) in her fiction, I see *Animal Dreams*, along with Shange's *Liliane*, as calling for both men and women to assume the duties of motherhood rather than expressing a conservative view that relegates women to traditional roles.<sup>19</sup> In each work, the father fails to nurture his children effectively.

Because of each man's personal reaction to his wife's absence, neither Liliane's father, Parnell, nor Codi's father, Homer, is able to provide the ideal environment for his children. In fact, Parnell is largely to blame for Liliane's separation from her mother. Although accustomed and resigned to his wife's promiscuous behavior, he cannot accept her affair with a white man. To spare himself embarrassment over what he sees as a betrayal to him and to the race, he divorces Sunday Bliss and banishes her from the home, telling his daughter that her mother is dead. In *Animal Dreams*, Homer, devastated by his wife's death, withdraws emotionally. Already segregated from the community of Grace because of the way that his ancestors were treated, Homer raises his daughters to believe that they have no connection to the rest of the town. Hampered by grief or wounded pride, not accustomed to playing the role of caregiver, and not recognizing the potential aid of people outside the family unit, both Homer and Parnell fail to give their daughters adequate emotional support. The problem in these families comes not so much from the absence of the mother but from the assumption that only she can provide the nurturing a child needs.

Death and divorce are not the only circumstances in which a child can experience a parent's absence. Other recovery writers depict either or both parents withdrawing emotionally because of their own personal traumas. For instance, Lila Wingfield, the mother in *The Prince of Tides*, has difficulty coping with the rape of her son, daughter, and herself, so she forbids all talk of the incident and therefore cuts off her children's access to the comfort they need. Martin's parents, in *The Music Room*, disappointed in their own aborted careers and miserable in their marriage, retreat into alcohol and are thus inaccessible to their sons. While it is tempting to see these characters, along with Parnell and Homer, as simply flawed, the plots suggest otherwise. By portraying therapy as providing protagonists with the nurturing they failed to get in childhood and by presenting other,

<sup>19</sup> Patn Swartz (1993) and Roberta Rubenstein (1996) also give more positive readings of *Animal Dreams* than Ryan, though neither deals directly with gender roles in the family

more successful familial configurations, these novels seem to argue that the problem lies in the way that society has prescribed limited roles for members of the immediate family, putting all the responsibility for nurturing children on one, or at most two, adult figures.

Within the recovery genre, there is a third set of narratives in which parents are neither abusive nor negligent but nevertheless prove incapable of protecting their children from trauma. Although the traditional family's insularity may make characters outside its perimeters unwilling to question a parent's treatment of a child, these boundaries do not ensure that the child will be sheltered from violence, prejudice, and other negative social conditions. In *The Throat* and *The Prince of Tides*, for example, a child is sexually molested or raped by someone outside the family. Because of this criminal's social influence or strength, the family remains either ignorant of the victimization or unable to prevent it. In *Cat's Eye*, Elaine's mother cannot protect her from the torment the other children inflict, even when their actions threaten Elaine's life and psychological well-being. Atwood shows that the shelter the home provides only extends so far, and the prejudices of the society outside its walls can be as devastating to children as they can be to adults. Other protagonists in recovery fiction suffer from the trauma of having witnessed or committed acts of violence at a young age. The narrators of Susan Chehak's *Smithereens* (1995), Reynolds Price's *Kate Vaiden* (1986), and Kellerman's *Self-Defense* have been adversely affected when, as children, they saw adults, both inside and outside the family, commit murder or suicide. Lish even shows how a violent culture can influence a child's actions when the protagonist of *Peru* kills a playmate at the age of six.

Novelists who go furthest in acknowledging the degree to which the social structure shapes behavior in the domestic sphere are least likely to portray the protagonist's full recovery. By depicting their characters as alienated individuals who are unable to form meaningful connections with other adults, these writers provide strong indictments of familial and social abuses. Novels that deny the happy endings characteristic of popular fiction are generally granted more critical status. Through both the narratives themselves and the critical commentary they generate, readers are exposed to provocative criticism of the traditional family and the society that supports it.

Recovery novels that have the status of middlebrow fiction are more likely to provide readers with happy endings, tidy resolutions to the protagonist's struggle for self-definition. As a mark of their full recovery, protagonists in these texts frequently form relationships that are healthier than those found within their families of origin. By setting up contrasts

between these two images of family life, middlebrow recovery writers are, in essence, advocating specific strategies for familial reform.

The recovery genre, as a whole, is remarkable for including representations of a wide array of alternative families. Gay couples, unrelated characters who share the same household, people whose needs or interests have caused them to bond: in all of these cases, what seems to identify a group as a family is the way that the individuals involved view their relationship. By creating characters who seek security, emotional fulfillment, and economic support through a variety of means, recovery writers are legitimizing forms of connection that have not been as widely accepted in the past. However, not all of these alternative families are portrayed as ideal. "Postmodern families" are also capable of inflicting pain on one another, and, occasionally, recovery narratives will present these configurations as paralleling the traditional family of origin in their behavior.<sup>20</sup> What distinguishes positive models of family from their dysfunctional counterparts is not a matter of the individual parties' gender, sexual orientation, or legal ties but the manner in which the members of a family interact with one another. And this interaction, these texts maintain, is governed by the way that the family is constructed.

For example, Griffith contrasts two lesbian relationships in *Slow River*. The first is shown in a negative light as it reproduces the patterns found in the protagonist's original family; the second appears more successful because of the balance of power that the two women work to maintain. Spanner, Lore's first partner, controls the finances, for she has the knowledge and the criminal connections that allow her to make money, while Lore's fugitive status makes her unable to gain access to her family's wealth and unable to work for a living. Hardened by her own past and by her current lifestyle, Spanner also refuses to become vulnerable emotionally, manipulating both friends and colleagues to gain power and money (1995, 121). The relationship between Lore and Spanner mirrors that of Lore's parents, the van de Oests, with one spouse desiring control of others inside and outside the domestic sphere.

In contrast, Lore has achieved some measure of independence by the time she meets Magyar. Because both women are employed and are economically self-sufficient, the power dynamics within the relationship fluctuate. Griffith portrays these women as constantly negotiating, switching their roles and positions depending on their needs and the situation at hand. For example, although Magyar is Lore's supervisor, Lore has su-

<sup>20</sup> I take the term *postmodern families* from Stacey's sociological studies *Brave New Families* (1990) and *In the Name of the Family* (1996).

perior knowledge of the biological engineering principles behind the plant's operation and of the procedures that will protect them from potential danger. Rather than vying for power, the two women cooperate on an equal footing first to avert disaster when the plant is sabotaged and then to uncover the plot that explains not only what happened at the plant but also the mystery behind Lore's kidnapping.

While recovery plots stress the need for a certain degree of economic independence on the part of a family's adult members, they do not seem to require economic parity between these characters. They do insist, however, on characters having the same emotional investment in the relationship. Through the final scenes involving Spanner and Magyar, Griffith accents the difference in their natures. Spanner sits alone in a bar, staring at her reflection in a mug of beer. Her narcissism, Griffith seems to suggest, makes her incapable of forming close relationships. In contrast, we last see Magyar staring into Lore's eyes, and then the two women walking away, "hand in hand down the street" (1995, 343). Lore comments, "This woman's eyes were bright and lively, full of herself and her vision of me. I could see myself there, if I looked" (343). This description of their gaze stresses a healthy balance between the narcissistic impulse (seeing the self mirrored in the other) and the recognition of the other as having a fully formed and separate identity. Griffith, like other recovery novelists, reinforces the therapeutic assumption that people who engage in self-analysis and who are willing to share their inner emotions with others are more capable of forming successful relationships than characters who are less self-reflexive.<sup>21</sup>

In pairing two women to exemplify the ideal family, Griffith does not challenge existing notions about gender, since our society traditionally views women as having greater relational needs and abilities. Instead, she seems to be advocating a "full lesbianism," in that masculine women are eliminated from the plot, and the only characters who remain, regardless of gender, are sensitive, caring, apologetic, and cooperative—traits traditionally associated with the "feminine." Indeed, if we look at the entire recovery genre and note how these works paint self-scrutiny, emotional connection, and open communication as viable goals for male and female protagonists, we can see that this fiction is advocating that both genders suppress traditionally masculine traits and develop the qualities that have

<sup>21</sup> Giddens also discusses the connection between self-analysis and relationships, arguing that "the pure relationship is a key environment for building the reflexive project of the self, since it both allows for and demands organised and continuous self-understanding—the means of securing a durable tie to the other" (1991, 186).

always been associated with the feminine. Recovery novelists depict the close bonds that develop between straight men (*The Throat*), between men and women whose relationship is essentially platonic (*The Music Room*), and between men and women who are sexually involved (*Animal Dreams*) as equally important. The key to success within these "families" is that each member values emotional exchange and is willing to expose himself or herself to the scrutiny of the other. Individuals within these relationships depend on one another, but they do not have to conform to predetermined and fixed roles. Instead, roles and responsibilities fluctuate according to the capabilities and needs of those involved.

As adult members of the ideal family share the burdens of generating income and supporting one another emotionally, they also share the responsibility of raising children. Male characters are frequently depicted as taking as great an interest in the welfare of children as their female counterparts. In *The Music Room*, for instance, Martin's journey to the past leads him to devote his future to the care of abused children. Although he and his brother's widow have agreed to a platonic relationship, he still plans on sharing the responsibility of raising Perry's child with her. Martin's expectations of this family unit are notably diminished with respect to the mythic image he holds of what his original family could have been (1990, 261), but they are a far cry from the more devastating images of dysfunctional families he encounters in the newspaper and on the street (263-65, 274).

On the whole, the atmosphere found in the home of the ideal, post-modern family is not that different from the environment that the traditional family was supposed to provide. What has changed is the role each gender is expected to play within the domestic and public realms. Instead of portraying women as responsible for creating a safe, nurturing environment and men as responsible for negotiating with a harsh, cruel world, recovery novelists depict both genders as equally involved in each activity. When these roles and responsibilities are shared, recovery writers suggest, the chances are better that a family can actually create a healthy domestic environment without sacrificing the welfare of its members. The makeup of the new family is also depicted as more fluid, with members being added to the fold when necessary so that everyone's emotional and physical needs can be satisfied.

Such images of ideal family life within the recovery plots can be seen as wishful thinking on the part of the novelists and their readers. In order to make such configurations seem possible, novelists essentially ignore the impact of the larger social system. They narrow the scope of their narrative, focusing on characters' private exchanges rather than on their position

within a capitalist, patriarchal society. They do not deal with the larger cultural factors that promote competition, reward dominance, and reinforce gender stereotypes. Characters who would exert their power over those who are weak or vulnerable disappear from the story, replaced by an extensive network of citizens who desire only the best for their neighbors and their children. Sexual abusers, the most heinous of villains, are always eliminated from the plot. Those who do not die of natural causes are executed (in an act that is portrayed as essentially merciful), or they are sent away so that they cannot continue to inflict harm on others.

Eliminating the abusive villain, on one level, can be seen as a technique that satisfies the vengeful desires of the audience. However, these scenes actually serve a far more important purpose. They allow recovery writers to show other characters effectively interceding in private matters in order to ensure a child's protection. When the borders around the family are made more permeable, these plots suggest, not only do family members benefit from the additional care and security that outsiders provide, but the community itself becomes more unified through its common defense of the child.

A scene from McFarland's *School for the Blind* demonstrates the good that can come of a community's willingness to interfere in family affairs on behalf of the less powerful. Muriel and Deirdre witness a man beating a small boy on a city street. Even before Muriel recognizes the boy as a neighbor's child, Deirdre reacts to the situation by yelling, "Hey, why don't you pick on somebody your own size" (1994, 267). By the time they reach Nicolas, "a small black woman, a passerby, is attempting to comfort him" (268). Muriel's assumption that the abuser was the boy's estranged father, though incorrect, does show that she is willing to intercede in a family's personal affairs in order to protect a child from harm. Likewise, the black woman's statement, "Well, somebody ought to do something if you ask me" (270), reveals a general intolerance for domestic abuse. The importance that McFarland places on the image of community involvement is clear from the central position this scene takes within the overall plot. The man who was abusing Nicolas turns out to be the serial murderer sought by the central characters, and Deirdre and Muriel's intervention results in his subsequent capture.

McFarland's scene illustrates a major change in the way that the culture has come to view the family at the turn of the century. Rather than being a private, impenetrable domain, ruled completely by the patriarch, the family has increasingly become subject to regulations from outside its borders. Medical, legal, and social authorities have far more control over what happens within the family than they have had in the past. But what

is interesting in McFarland's plot, and indeed in most recovery novels, is that individual citizens, not official state or medical authorities, are the ones depicted as interfering in domestic matters. In fact, the characters who traditionally have the least authority in the culture, in this case a black female, an elderly woman, and a poor, single mother, are the ones who effectively prevent a white male from harming a child. In this way, recovery novelists laud the practice of collective social action, but at the same time they minimize the threat such policing may seem to pose. When friends and neighbors replace the authorities as inspectors of child-rearing practices, and when their interference in private matters is portrayed as originating in the noblest of motives, then the increasingly permeable borders of the family can seem a positive advancement in the way that our society is organized, not a threat to individual freedom.

In their very structures, recovery texts reinforce the view that the boundaries around the family unit should be more permeable. By penetrating the walls of the domestic sphere and encouraging the reader to analyze the dynamics of family life, recovery writers contribute to what Giddens calls institutional reflexivity. No matter how sacred the notions of family may be, this structure, like all modern social institutions, is dynamic. Recovery narratives are but one part of a larger network of stimuli compelling individual readers to examine the family's flaws and to imagine ways of improving interpersonal relationships.

As the protagonists of recovery novels go through what is essentially a therapeutic process, the reader is asked to play the role of therapist. The first-person, confessional nature of the narration invites an empathetic response from the reader, but the mystery that lies at the center of the narrative also forces the reader into an analytical mode, searching for a clue in the past that would explain the protagonist's current uneasiness. At the end of most of these novels, when the mystery is solved and the protagonist's story is complete, readers may feel a sense of satisfaction even when they are aware, on a deeper level, that the tidy resolution afforded by the plot is unrealistic since the process of self-analysis is never ending.<sup>22</sup> Although these texts support the therapeutic paradigm that shapes them by depicting the protagonist's journey to the past as a viable

<sup>22</sup> Even in texts like *Cat's Eye*, where Atwood highlights the protagonist's "indeterminacy and multiplicity as a subject" (Howells 1994, 206) and where she shows that the past is only what her character continues to reconstruct for the purposes of the present (Ingersoll 1991), the reader feels a sense of satisfaction when Elaine's retrospective journey allows her to understand and feel sympathy for her tormentor, Cordelia, and for the adults, like Mrs. Smeath, who sanctioned this cruelty.

means of achieving a more stable sense of self, they are still capable of alerting the reader to problems inherent in this process and to the problems that plague society as a whole. As the literary criticism generated by some of these novels readily shows, they are capable of sparking discussion of larger social issues. Recovery narratives also call on the reader to choose between conflicting views of memory and therapy, to evaluate models of individual behavior and familial interaction, and to recognize the impact that systemic power hierarchies and dominant ideologies have on personal experience.

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## **Deconstructing and Locating Survivor Discourse: Dynamics of Narrative, Empowerment, and Resistance for Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse**

In her now classic article, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of the Partial Perspective," Donna Haraway argues that those subjugated by forces of oppression are knowledgeable of modes of denial through repression, forgetting, and disappearing acts (1988, 584). Her argument for situating the social location and dynamics of power in the construction of knowledge raises important issues for the development and analysis of so-called survivor discourse that have yet to be explored. While those who have suffered abuse may be more likely than those who have not had such experiences to recognize the processes by which denial and repression contribute to the ongoing abuse of women and children in this society, their clearer vision is not an inevitable outcome of the experience of abuse. In fact, the term *survivor* is typically reserved for those who have self-consciously redefined their relationship to the experience from one of "victim."<sup>1</sup> This redefinition can be accomplished through a combination of influences, including personal reformulation of earlier experiences, therapeutic interventions, identification with cultural products such as "incest poetry" or survivor narratives, and discussions with others who self-define as survivors. Often incorporated as evidence for survivor status are presentations of public testimony or public claims that take the form of speaking out in the media or in other public forums. These forums and discursive formations often render invisible the "matrix of domination" (Collins 1990) embedded in and throughout their production and circulation. As Linda Alcoff and Laura Gray assert, "Before we speak we need to look at where the incitement to speak originates, what relations of power and domination may

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<sup>1</sup> See Chew 1998, Mitchell and Morse 1998.

exist between those who incite and those who are asked to speak, as well as to whom the disclosure is directed" (1993, 284).

Taking up the challenge posed by Alcoff and Gray to locate "where the incitement to speak originates," almost a decade ago I began charting the social and institutional locations from which—and the methodology through which—survivor discourse is generated to explore how "relations of ruling" (Smith 1987) are organized in and through these locations. I employ the term *relations of ruling* to help explore how the dynamics of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, and sexuality are infused throughout the institutional sites in which survivor discourse is produced. In this article, I offer a materialist feminist analysis of survivor discourse that attends to both the discursive and institutional practices that shape who gets to speak, who gets heard, and what the potential might be for challenging the depoliticization and reprivatization of survivor discourse.

I argue that with greater attention given to the material context in which survivors "come to voice" (Barringer 1992), go public with their experiences of childhood abuse (Naples 1996), or engage with each other in defining the meaning of these experiences in their lives, we might be better equipped to address two of the main problems faced within contemporary survivor politics: first, how to determine when and where certain strategies offer more effective challenges than others (e.g., when speaking from experience is mediated, reprivatized, or oppositional in its effect); and second, how to remain sensitive to the myriad of ways class, race, and sexuality, among other features of identity and history, differentially affect survivors' experiences.

### **Materialist feminism and survivor discourse**

Materialist feminist scholars argue for an intersectional approach and resist abstracting gender from other dimensions of social identity.<sup>2</sup> The dynamics of gender, race, class, and sexuality are embedded in the diverse contexts through which survivor discourse is generated and challenged, as well as woven into the discourse, yet few analyses provide an intersectional explication of how difference and institutional patterns of inequality shape the production and circulation of survivor discourse. According to Dorothy Smith, we draw on the relevance established through "discourse institutionalized in relations and apparatuses of ruling" (1989, 47) to interpret the world around us. Much of the feminist work on survivor

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Crenshaw 1993; Hennessy and Ingraham 1997; and Brenner 2000.

discourse emphasizes how social actors, including survivors of child sexual abuse, do not operate outside these interpretive processes and institutional practices.<sup>3</sup> While social actors are not free to choose the discursive frames through which to articulate political goals, some actors are situated in positions of power to control the production of discursive frames.

Contemporary analyses of survivor discourse have yet to analyze intersectionally the multiple sites through which survivors of childhood sexual assault come to identify as survivors and interpret their experiences. Expert and otherwise mediated accounts, individual as well as group approaches, and structured as well as nonstructured dialogues among survivors all contribute to a multiplicity of social processes through which survivor discourse is generated.<sup>4</sup> Talk shows, celebrity biographies, newspaper accounts, fiction, songs, poetry and dramatic presentations, survivor-generated newsletters, and research studies also inform the shape and content of survivor discourse.<sup>5</sup> Each of these diverse sites is further organized by social relations of class, race/ethnicity, culture, and sexuality, relations that change over time. Furthermore, those from different class backgrounds will have differential access and relate differently to various productions or approaches within the complex construction of survivor discourse. In addition, as Janice Doane and Devon Hodges note, "incest narratives produced under different historical conditions are distinguishable from one another, but even roughly contemporaneous stories that share generic similarities are not simple clones of one another" (2001, 3).<sup>6</sup>

Some survivors of childhood sexual assault may not find it necessary to claim a public position within the discourse nor to enter the public discourse (although they are obviously implicated in survivor discourse in significant ways).<sup>7</sup> Despite the pervasive belief in the importance of breaking the silence and speaking out about early childhood abuse in earlier accounts of survivor discourse, not all of those who have experienced

<sup>3</sup> See, e.g., Davies 1995; Haaken 1998, and Reavey and Gough 2000

<sup>4</sup> See Champagne 1996; Haaken 1998; and Crossley 2000.

<sup>5</sup> See also Edell 1990; Wisechild 1991; Barminger 1992; Armstrong 1994; Cvetkovich 1995; McLennan 1996; Rapping 1996.

<sup>6</sup> See also Smart 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, as Diana Meyers emphasizes, "mandating oppositional politics as a prerequisite for the self-understanding needed to speak in one's own voice is insufficiently respectful of women's uniqueness as individuals, for many women have conflicting commitments or find other methods of getting in touch with themselves more in keeping with their personal style" (2002, 20).

sexual abuse as children may find appropriate institutional sites in which, or sympathetic confidants with whom, to share their experiences.<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, as Alcoff and Gray write, "The coercive stance that one must tell, must join a support group, or must go into therapy is justly deserving of the critique Foucault offers of the way in which the demand to speak involves dominating power and an imperialist theoretical structure" (1993, 281).<sup>9</sup> One way to identify those who are left out of the discourse or who are coerced to speak is to clarify whose voices are surfacing within each institutional or local site through which survivor discourse is constructed and expressed. In this way we can identify the gaps, fissures, and silences, as well as the voices and institutional locations that dominate the discourse.

The feminist movement to end violence against women was conceived in the consciousness-raising (CR) groups of the women's liberation movement during the late 1960s and early 1970s (Dobash and Dobash 1992; Profitt 2000). Within these groups, women learned to move beyond discussion of privately experienced problems into political action. Feminist activists successfully raised public awareness of the privately experienced problem of wife abuse by naming the problem, then generating strategies to fight violence against women in all areas of social life. Activists worked with politicians to pass legislation that would protect women from abusive spouses and punish abusers. They negotiated with the police to develop effective community responses. They created hot lines and other services for battered women. They succeeded in earmarking public funds to support the development and expansion of battered women's shelters as a primary strategy to help women leave violent homes and relationships. Consciousness-raising strategies and feminist activism also led to a recognition of the extensive problem of sexual and physical abuse against children perpetrated by parents, primarily fathers, and other male relatives. Thus, feminists challenged the hegemonic myth of the nurturing nuclear family form and the long-held denial of childhood sexual abuse termed "a Freudian cover-up" by Florence Rush (1980).<sup>10</sup> The effective feminist challenge led to changes in laws, a lengthening of the time frame for prosecution, a network of survivors' groups, and an extensive so-called incest recovery industry. It also prompted a backlash from powerful quarters, most prominently illustrated by the False Memory Syndrome Foun-

<sup>8</sup> See Butler 1985, Bass and Davis 1988; Hall and Lloyd 1989; Barninger 1992

<sup>9</sup> See also McNay 1992; Wilson 1994; and Meyers 2002.

<sup>10</sup> See also, e.g., Renvoizé 1982; Bass and Thornton 1983; Miller 1984; Butler 1985; Stanko 1985; Ratner 1990.



dation founded in 1992 by parents accused of child sexual abuse. I examine the contours of the repressed memories/false memory debate in a subsequent section. In the next section, I discuss the process of consciousness-raising and the limits and possibilities of giving voice to survivors' experiences for an oppositional survivors' movement.

### **Giving voice to experience and the limits of survivor discourse**

In her assessment of consciousness-raising processes, Deborah Gerson cautions that "the process of 'unlearning to not speak' does not solve the problematic of what is to be said, what is to be done" (1995, 33). Her analysis raises questions about the efficacy of the call for survivors of childhood sexual abuse to "come to voice" (Barringer 1992) as grounds on which to build an oppositional survivors' movement. In her reflection on the potential for "insurgent collective" identities developed within CR groups to serve as the basis for collective social action, Gerson concludes that "the small group enabled women to forge an 'insurgent collective identity,' but the power to strategize and organize a movement to overcome the social conditions of that identity remained unrealized" (1995, 29). The lack of a central organization to coordinate "anti-institutional activity" further inhibited collective political action (1995).<sup>11</sup> In addition, Gerson adds, "Speaking truth to power does not topple it, and the freeing of our voices has made it clear that women have many voices, many experiences, many 'truths'" (1995, 33-34). While faith in the radical potential of consciousness-raising has been shaken since the 1970s, contemporary feminists interested in developing an oppositional survivors' movement continue to promote consciousness-raising as a vital political strategy.

Biddy Martin and Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1986) raise a concern that poses an even greater challenge to "speaking truth to power" and to working collectively with others who are coparticipants in struggles for social justice. They point out that there is an "irreconcilable tension between the search for a secure place from which to speak, within which to act, and the awareness of the price at which secure places are bought, the awareness of the exclusions, the denials, the blindnesses on which they are predicated" (206). Furthermore, as Patricia Hill Collins (1998) notes, "In the context of a new politics of containment in which visibility can bring increased surveillance, breaking silence by claiming the authority of experience has less oppositional impact than in the past" (51). However,

<sup>11</sup> See also Joreen 1973

recognizing the limits of finding voice and speaking out need not result in an unwillingness to deal with the risks associated with such efforts. Rather, as Collins (1998) notes in her discussion of bell hooks's notion of self-reflective speech, "dialogues among individual women who share their individual angles of vision" can contribute to "the process of crafting a group-based point of view" that, in turn, can provide the grounds for collective action (47).

The dilemmas of difference and depoliticization embedded in CR groups and other forums where survivors of child sexual abuse engage with one another can also be found in analyses of individual survivor accounts. As Louise Armstrong argues, the challenge for survivors is not only to have "the courage to think and to speak in one's own language" but "to make that language heard in the larger world" (1994, 273). Yet how do we move from these local and limited sites of politicization to a more effective and broader movement? Doane and Hodges point out the tendency in early feminist accounts to construct the survivor as sexually innocent. In an effort to mobilize outrage against childhood sexual abuse, these narratives denied "all sexual feeling to the child" (2001, 115). In contrast, they argue, authors Dorothy Allison (1992) and Sapphire (1996) offer complex fictionalized incest narratives grounded, respectively, in the world of poor rural whites and poor inner-city blacks that resist creating "a victim neither innocent nor blamable, neither passive nor free" (Doane and Hodges 2001, 117). In their assessment of the more complicated incest narratives produced by authors Allison and Sapphire, Doane and Hodges find "an alternative story that acknowledges asymmetries of power without sentimentalizing or desexualizing the female child" (115). By challenging a reductive analysis of incest and complicating the construction of survivors to incorporate the intersection of gender, race, and class, writers such as Allison and Sapphire shift the standpoint of telling and foreground the ways race and class inequalities limit the opportunities for some women to come to voice about their experiences of childhood sexual abuse and to be heard when they do speak out.

British author Michelle Crossley calls for narrative analyses that include attention to "the 'interchange of speakers' in a 'defining community' of which one forms a constituent part" (2000, 73).<sup>12</sup> In this way, discourse

<sup>12</sup> Crossley (1999, 2000) questions her earlier interpretation of the depoliticized therapeutic culture that pervades written incest narratives of the 1980s and 1990s (Crossley published her previous publication under the name of Davies). In *Childhood Sexual Abuse and the Construction of Identity. Healing Sylvia* (Davies 1995), she revisits her assessment of the "architecture of subjectivation" by analyzing Sylvia Fraser's autobiography, *My Father's*

analyses that fail to locate the material and cultural contexts that surround and are woven through the production of diverse and overlapping narratives "tend to lose sight of human agency and personal subjectivity" (Crossley 2000, 73). The materialist feminist approach I recommend remains sensitive to the complex and shifting constellations of power in different locations, in CR groups as well as in self-help groups, in reading strategies and in processes of identification, in narrations of experience as well as in other modes of expression. While I agree that experience is a powerful basis on which to identify issues and create linkages with others, as a political strategy it remains limited, for it is necessarily bound up within particular social locations and discursive frames. The methodological challenge for an oppositional survivors' movement is to go beyond the local expressions of particular experiences in order to target the processes by which such experiences are organized.

Feminist activists and scholars of the 1970s contributed to the burgeoning literature on sexual violence against women that included exposing "the best-kept secret" of childhood sexual abuse (Rush 1980; Russell 1986).<sup>13</sup> Some of the earliest feminist accounts, such as Louise Armstrong's *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* (1978) and Judith Herman's *Father-Daughter Incest* (1981), present "telling" as the key to the politicization of survivors as well as to their mental health (Doane and Hodges 2001). A decade later, feminist scholars foregrounded "the limits to the value of revealing secrets" in discussing the transformative potential of survivor discourse (Cvetkovich 1995, 358). Many feminist writers recognize the importance of language for giving "voice—meaning—to our experiences" and shaping our subjectivity (Weedon 1987, 33).<sup>14</sup> However, the context in which "giving voice" takes place shapes the political and oppositional possibilities of such expression.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, not all survivor accounts, even those generated without expert mediation (a strategy Alcoff and Gray recommend in order to abolish the separation "between experience and analysis embodied in the confessional's structure" [1993, 282]), offer similar political analyses. What role do feminist "experts" play in legitimating or reprivatizing survivor discourse? What constitutes survivor discourse? What are the differences between survivor accounts that derive from individual narratives and those that result from collective conscious-

*House. A Memoir of Incest and Healing* (1988). Crossley explores the extent to which Fraser's incorporation of therapeutic discourse manifests "liberating and repressive potentials" (1999, 1694). See also Evans and Maines 1995, Clegg 1999; Doane and Hodges 2001.

<sup>13</sup> See also Bass and Thornton 1983; Butler 1985.

<sup>14</sup> See also Barringer 1992; Armstrong 1994.

<sup>15</sup> See Crossley 2000; Doane and Hodges 2001.

ness-raising strategies? When we shift to collectively generated survivor accounts, how do we treat the diversity of perspectives embedded within them? How do relations of ruling structure, in a materialist sense, what is possible to "know" within particular locations serving as the sites for consciousness-raising groups and other forums that facilitate the production and circulation of survivor discourse?

My materialist feminist analysis of survivor discourse is grounded in the everyday practices of "knowers" who are differentially positioned within survivor discourse. This approach, drawn from Dorothy Smith's (1992, 91) "everyday world" sociology of knowledge, provides a strategy for locating analysis of survivor discourse in the material practices that give rise to diverse resistance strategies.<sup>16</sup> My approach is also influenced by the work of Nancy Fraser. In her materialist feminist appropriation of Michel Foucault, Fraser identifies three forms of "needs talk" used to make claims within the modern welfare state: "oppositional," "reprivatization," and "expert" discourses. Fraser explains the "plurality of competing ways of talking about needs" as follows: "(1) expert needs discourses of, for example, social workers and therapists, on the one hand, and welfare administrators, planners, and policy makers, on the other; (2) oppositional movement needs discourses of, for example, feminists, lesbians and gays, people of color, workers, and welfare clients; and (3) 'reprivatization' discourses of constituencies seeking to repatriate newly problematized needs to their former domestic or official economic enclave" (1989, 157). Fraser argues that these discourses "compete with one another in addressing the fractured social identities of potential adherents" (157). By attending to the relations of ruling embedded in the expert discourse on childhood sexual abuse as well as identifying the processes through which hegemonic assumptions of gender, race, class, and sexuality undergird dominant constructions, it is possible to highlight sites of resistance and contradictions posed by oppositional formations. This strategy is also useful for exploring the contradictions of reprivatization.<sup>17</sup>

Contemporary medical and psychiatric discourse on survivors of childhood sexual assault might obviously fall within the arena of expert discourse, yet on further examination the line between expert and oppositional discourses appears shifting and murky, especially when we insert

<sup>16</sup> While Smith utilizes Foucault's (1970) notion of discourse, she differentiates her approach from Foucault's and argues that "there are indeed matters to be spoken and spoken of that discourse does not yet encompass" (1992, 183).

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Kitzinger and Perkins 1993, Crossley 2000

the discursive and practical interventions of feminist psychotherapists.<sup>18</sup> Feminists who spoke as experts on childhood sexual assault contributed to an oppositional discourse that challenged the traditional psychoanalytic expert model.<sup>19</sup> Survivor discourse may appear to fall within the category of oppositional discourse. However, survivor discourse may also become reprivatized or reinscribed as expert discourse (Fraser 1989).

### **Feminist experts and survivor discourse**

Survivor discourse is often posed in contrast to expert discourse, which is legitimated through a distinction between different forms of knowledge production, one that derives from personal experience and emotional pain versus one grounded in more systematic and presumed objective truth claims. Fraser includes "therapeutic discourses circulated in public and private medical and social service agencies" in her definition of "expert needs discourses" (1989, 173–74). She argues that while most expert needs discourses are "restricted to specialized publics," the "expert and rhetorics . . . are disseminated to a wider spectrum of educated laypersons, some of whom are participants in social movements" (174). This is clearly the case in the psychotherapeutic constructions of childhood sexual abuse and the treatment needs of survivors.

Feminist challenges to psychoanalytic approaches that denied women's reports of childhood sexual abuse pointed out how the practice of psychoanalysis reproduced gender inequality as well as the abuse of women (Rush 1980; Herman 1981). Reports of sexual abuse committed by therapists, feminists argued, further illustrated how mental health professionals could misuse their power over women patients.<sup>20</sup> Feminist interventions into the medical/psychiatric discourse on childhood sexual abuse and incest included challenges from inside as well as outside the medical and psychiatric establishment. Feminists who were also psychotherapists spoke from their vantage point as trained professionals and experts on women's mental health needs.<sup>21</sup> While some may have experienced childhood sexual abuse or other forms of violence, their claims were typically supported through their experience treating women clients in need of mental health services.<sup>22</sup> More recently, feminists have raised concerns about the "trauma

<sup>18</sup> See Minkin 1994; Marecek and Krazetz 1998.

<sup>19</sup> See, e.g., Herman 1981, 1992; Dinmore 1991.

<sup>20</sup> See also McLellan 1995; Haaken 1998.

<sup>21</sup> See Courtois 1988; Haaken and Schlaps 1991; and McLellan 1995.

<sup>22</sup> See, e.g., Brickman 1984; Hyde 1986; and Dinmore 1991.

paradigm" that dominates contemporary psychotherapeutic approaches. Social work educator Mary Gilfus explains that the trauma paradigm "renders trauma as an individual psychological response that is ultimately constructed and diagnosed as psychopathology" (1999, 1241). In contrast to the trauma paradigm, Gilfus argues for "a survivor-centered epistemology that is oriented toward recognizing strengths as well as injuries, is culturally inclusive . . . and builds on the wisdom of victimization and survival that is part of women's lives" (1999, 1239). Since many feminist experts framed their analyses within the wider critiques offered by the feminist movement, their expert discourse can be viewed as a "bridge discourse" that helped link the feminist critiques with the wider social terrain (Fraser 1989, 174).

Feminist psychotherapists consequently contributed to the blurring between the expert construction of incest and survivor discourse.<sup>23</sup> Janice Haaken and Astrid Schlaps, who make a point of distinguishing between their identities "as feminists and as psychoanalytic therapists, rather than as feminist therapists," recognize a "tension and theoretical divide between the personal and the political realms of experience" (1991, 40). Drawing on feminist critiques of science, medicine, and psychoanalysis, feminist psychotherapists and researchers highlighted the role of social structural, particularly patriarchal, processes in shaping women's mental health; argued for a centering of women's perspectives in the therapeutic process; and emphasized the role of empowerment in healing from mental illness.<sup>24</sup> These major claims shaped the feminist expert stance on the treatment needs of adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse as follows: first, given the extent to which women are abused by men in this society, the experience of abuse is a common occurrence that typically goes unrecognized or unchallenged in therapeutic settings; second, centering women's standpoint means that women should be believed when they describe abusive experiences, or, at the very least, women should be treated as credible representatives of their own experiences; and, finally, empowerment as a form of healing can include confrontation with perpetrators of abuse through personal letters and other methods, including legal action as well as more collective public speak-outs.

These claims were tied to oppositional discourse drawn from the feminist antiviolence movement. In recent years, feminist clinicians have tempered the proscription to "believe women" with the recognition that "there is no singular woman's story" (Haaken 1998, 8). In a similar vein,

<sup>23</sup> See, e.g., McLellan 1995, Enns 1996; and Heenan and Seu 1998.

<sup>24</sup> See, e.g., Dinmore 1991; Brown 1994; and Walker 1998.

feminist clinicians influenced by narrative approaches to psychology argue that "subjectivity as/in knowledge and power" should be understood "according to cultural discourses and cultural textuality" (Reavey and Gough 2000, 341). The narrative approach to therapeutic work with survivors also emphasizes the need to view people's accounts as situated rather than as either essentially true or false.<sup>25</sup> In this way, feminist and narrative therapeutic approaches directly contest what is at stake in the heated repressed memory/false memory debate.

### **Post-traumatic stress and questions of memory**

The debate between proponents of repressed memory and false memory syndrome and, especially, the role of recanters (now termed *rettractors*—those previously self-identified as survivors of childhood sexual abuse) in this debate further illustrates the need to deconstruct as well as locate the social and political context for survivor discourse.<sup>26</sup> As feminist practitioners Susan Contratto and M. Janice Gutfreund assert, "the 'recovered memory controversy' itself de-legitimizes survivors including (over the 'protests' of the anti-survivor movement) those whose abuse is corroborated by other evidence" (1996, 2–3).<sup>27</sup>

Reviewing the debate between supporters and opponents of repressed memories, I was struck by some similarity among critiques and a profound divergence among explanations.<sup>28</sup> Feminist and other survivor-oriented therapists who accept the phenomenon of repressed memories are critical of the dominant therapeutic regime for denying the extent to which childhood sexual assault occurs and the complex post-traumatic stress symptoms that follow.<sup>29</sup> For the most part, they criticize the patriarchal and authoritarian structure of medical, psychiatric, and social work discourse and practices.<sup>30</sup> Supporters of the false memory position also critique the

<sup>25</sup> As Evans and Maines argue, "The significance of this contextual dimension cannot be underemphasized. Each context, viewed as a network of relations and as a site of conventionalized narrative practice, contains different interests, criteria for believability, and norms of reporting and storytelling. The recovered past of incest must flow through those contexts, which means that it is transacted in different terms that result in from slightly to very different versions of the past" (1995, 319).

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., American Psychiatric Association 1993; Pezdek and Banks 1996; Schuman and Glavex 1996; Davis 2000.

<sup>27</sup> See also Haaken 1995, 1998.

<sup>28</sup> See also Beckett 1996; Davis 2000.

<sup>29</sup> See, e.g., Blume 1990; Fredrickson 1992.

<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Brown 1994.

professional psychological community, but the content of their critique focuses on psychologists' role in planting false memories and promoting an irresponsible hysteria about the pervasiveness of childhood sexual abuse.<sup>81</sup>

Some feminist clinicians agree with critics of repressed memories that lists of generic symptoms, such as those offered by E. Sue Blume (1990) or Ellen Bass and Laura Davis (1988), misrepresent the complex experiences of survivors and presume observable and lifelong aftereffects.<sup>82</sup> Janice Haaken asserts that "by ignoring the social context of memory retrieval and by treating memory as a sacral function that 'reveals' itself in an unmediated fashion, the authors [Bass and Davis] suspend critical awareness of the various influences shaping how women's stories get told" (1998, 197). Furthermore, Haaken argues, "While the trauma model may be mobilized to break through a deadening cultural insensitivity to human suffering, it also may be advanced defensively in countering scrutiny of therapeutic interventions in that suffering" (76).

Those who challenge the existence or extent of repressed memories also criticize the organization of mental health and child abuse services, which, they argue, creates an institutional bias against accused parents. They argue that "memory work" creates a context for, among other problematic outcomes, therapists implanting memories or validating false memories in their clients.<sup>83</sup> Writers on both sides of the controversy are especially concerned with the additional harm done by the law enforcement and legal system when cases of childhood sexual abuse are investigated and subsequently brought to court.<sup>84</sup> Of course, proponents and opponents of repressed memories construct the victims of the legal system in contrasting ways: proponents concentrate on the further trauma suffered by survivors who are not believed or constructed as complicit in their abuse, while opponents center the experiences of the falsely accused and the harm done to the family unit as a whole.<sup>85</sup>

<sup>81</sup> See, e.g., Goldstein and Farmer 1992.

<sup>82</sup> See, e.g., Armstrong 1994.

<sup>83</sup> In her book of case studies, Annette Kuhn defines memory work as "a method and a practice of unearthing and making public untold stories, stories of lives lived out on the borderlands, lives for which the central interpretive devices of the culture don't quite work" (1995, 8). She describes the process of memory work as "potentially interminable: at every turn, as further questions are raised, there is always something else to look into" (5).

<sup>84</sup> See, e.g., Lowenstein 1990-91.

<sup>85</sup> See Susan Estrich's (1987) account of how the law enforcement and court system victimizes women who are willing to report and proceed with criminal prosecution against



An organization that has been central to the growing public attention to false memories is the False Memory Syndrome Foundation (FMSF). The FMSF was founded in 1992 by Pamela Freyd, the mother of psychologist Jennifer Freyd (1996), following Jennifer's accusation that her father had sexually abused her. Pamela Freyd, who has a doctorate in education, has been a vocal critic of her daughter's account.<sup>36</sup> The FMSF has raised a large amount of money and attained public visibility and notoriety in a relatively short period of time when contrasted with the time that it took for the problems of childhood sexual abuse to reach a similar level of public discourse.<sup>37</sup> A contributing factor to the public receptivity achieved by the FMSF is its appeal to family values and the construction of repressed memory advocates as undermining the nuclear family form.<sup>38</sup> According to the FMSF, women who claim they were survivors of incest alienate themselves from their families and from the support that they require.<sup>39</sup> The FMSF inverts the construction of victim and perpetrator, defining parents who are accused of sexually abusing their children as the victims and the adult daughters and their feminist therapists as perpetrators of false memories.<sup>40</sup>

False memory proponents are critical of the lack of scientific evidence developed to support the theory of repressed memories.<sup>41</sup> Some are especially vocal about the role of radical feminists and recovery books such as *The Courage to Heal* (Bass and Davis 1988) in creating an environment conducive to the development of false memories.<sup>42</sup> Repressed memory supporters, on the other hand, are concerned that the rise in attention to

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the men who raped them. See also Armstrong 1994 and Feldman-Summers 1996. See Wakefield and Underwager 1994 for discussion of the "falsely accused" dimension of the debate.

<sup>36</sup> Janice Haaken (1998) provides a very interesting analysis of the mother-daughter dynamics at work in this case and explores the implications of it for the memory debate more broadly (see also Dolan 1996).

<sup>37</sup> The extensive financial resources they have marshaled, along with a long list of professionals who support the foundation as members of the FMSF Scientific and Professional Advisory Board, stand in stark contrast to the low-budget and predominantly volunteer-run survivors groups facilitated through VOICES (Victims of Incest Can Emerge Survivors) in Action, Inc., founded in 1980 by survivors of child sexual abuse and their allies.

<sup>38</sup> See Meyers 2002.

<sup>39</sup> See Champagne 1996, 168.

<sup>40</sup> The FMSF account of false memories and the prescription for reestablishing normalized family relations simultaneously challenges the validity of the sexual abuse charge by the daughter and "facilitate[s] the daughter's return to the family" (Davis 2000, 39).

<sup>41</sup> See Loftus and Ketcham 1994, Ofshe and Waters 1994; Yapko 1994.

<sup>42</sup> See Wakefield and Underwager 1994.

false memories undermines efforts by clinicians and survivors alike to demonstrate the extent to which children are sexually abused (although most false memory authors deny that is their intent; Loftus and Ketcham 1994; Yapko 1994). Feminist clinicians concerned with the use of science to delegitimize survivor accounts, however, question the ways memory researchers remove the study of memory from "the context of other post-traumatic responses and study it in isolation as if there is no relationship between how people cope with trauma and how they recall it" (Brown 1996, 16).<sup>43</sup> Writers on both sides of the debate believe they are generating discourse in opposition to the dominant practices in the field of psychotherapy, although the contrasting standpoints—one rooted in the spoken experiences of women survivors, the other in the interests of the so-called falsely accused—profoundly shape the oppositional possibilities of their critiques.

Haaken and Schlaps, as feminists and psychoanalytic therapists, articulate a divergent position within this debate on repressed memory of childhood sexual assault. Rather than focus on the truth or falsity of memories, they challenge therapeutic practices of "incest resolution therapy" and conclude that "incest resolution therapy risks over-objectifying incest in that incest becomes the unifying event around which the patient's symptomatology and difficulties are organized" (1991, 39).<sup>44</sup> While they highlight the psychoanalytic dynamics between clinicians and their patients, they also explore the social and political context in which incest resolution therapy operates. Haaken and Schlaps make a strong argument for the power of the medical marketplace to push therapists toward short-term and "new and improved" methods of treatment (45). They conclude with the feminist question "Who decides the importance of sexual abuse in a woman's experience?" and highlight the dilemma of experience in their response: "The obvious answer is the woman herself, but we are concerned that many current applications of the literature on sexual abuse

<sup>43</sup> See also Reviere 1996.

<sup>44</sup> According to Haaken and Schlaps, incest resolution therapies foreground "the specific events surrounding the incest trauma, mobilizing of memories and affect associated with the incest experience, and encouraging catharsis as a means of resolving the trauma" (1991, 39). The patient's contemporary "life difficulties and symptomatology" (39) are viewed as a consequence of this traumatic early childhood experience. In the June 16, 1994, report of the Council on Scientific Affairs of the American Medical Association on "Memories of Childhood Abuse," the authors announced the adoption of a "new policy on memory enhancement methods," which asserts that "the AMA considers the technique of 'memory enhancement' in the area of childhood sexual abuse to be fraught with problems of potential misapplication."

understate the clinical complexity of this question" (46). Their solution to the dilemma lies in their commitment to "a broad-based psychodynamic approach" (47). They make no mention of alternative settings for recovery, nor do they address the broader debate on the role of self-help activities and mutual aid groups in the healing process. They do not discuss how the dynamics of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation shape the experience of survivors or the psychodynamic therapeutic context. Haaken and Schlaps do note that working-class and poor women and women of different cultural backgrounds may not have access to these therapeutic contexts and emphasize that poor women are treated with suspicion when their children are victims of child sexual abuse.

While Haaken and Schlaps begin their article on "Incest Resolution Therapy and the Objectification of Sexual Abuse" by addressing the importance of feminist CR practices of the women's movement for "exposing the reality of women's abusive experiences within the family" (40), they conclude with a reevaluation of the privatized psychotherapeutic setting. This should come as no surprise, for as therapists, Haaken and Schlaps are situated within this expert location. While they offer a sensitive critique of the practice of psychotherapy and sociopolitical constraints that might form the grounds for psychotherapeutic abuse, their goal does not include tackling a key issue of feminist praxis—namely, how women incest survivors might be empowered to determine the significance of childhood sexual abuse in their lives and to contribute to an oppositional movement. Yet when we shift to other sites in which survivors speak about their experiences of abuse, such as through the myriad of texts and cultural products now defined as part of the incest recovery industry, we confront other processes of reprivatization.

In the next section, I turn from the more privatized feminist therapeutic site in which survivors speak their experiences of abuse to a discussion of the multiple sites in which survivors speak to each other and in public in order to explore the possibilities for a more effective oppositional survivor discourse and to identify diverse sites of resistance. Since these sites are more dispersed and more easily accessed than the typically costly offices of feminist therapists, survivors from less privileged racial/ethnic, class, and cultural backgrounds may approach the process of healing through the recovery industry.

#### **The Incest recovery industry and reprivatization of survivor discourse**

One of the recovery texts most vilified by the false memory advocates and one of the most widely read by survivors is *The Courage to Heal* by Ellen

Bass and Laura Davis (1988). Laura Davis is an incest survivor. She shares her own experiences alongside those of other survivors in the book but notes that she did not originally identify as a survivor when she first started working on the book and that it took her a year before she could incorporate her own experiences of sexual abuse. Carol Barringer highlights the significance of this fear "to speak the truth" for other survivors as well. Barringer emphasizes that "to speak of her abuse, the survivor must not only defy her perpetrator's threats and the societal taboo, but she must also give up the very protections that have enabled her to survive—the forgetting, the denial, the numbness" (1992, 8). For Barringer, as for Bass and Davis, there are typical symptoms, identifiable patterns, and recommended strategies of healing for adults who were sexually victimized as children that act to construct the incest survivor as an identifiable subject. Barringer, Bass, and Davis insist that the survivor knows best how to proceed through the healing process if given a nonjudgmental, safe place to explore her feelings, although they do offer a framework for healing. Further, they assert that "if you don't remember your abuse, you are not alone. Many women don't have memories, and some never get memories. This doesn't mean you weren't abused" (Armstrong 1994, 212). This assertion is criticized by feminist writers such as Louise Armstrong (1994) and antifeminist writers as well as false memory proponents such as Hollida Wakefield and Ralph Underwager (1994), albeit for significantly different reasons.

Armstrong locates *The Courage to Heal* within a flurry of attention to incest in literature and TV that constitutes the incest recovery industry. In her provocative book, *Rocking the Cradle of Sexual Politics: What Happened When Women Said Incest* (1994), Armstrong notes with astonishment that, since the publication of her book *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* in 1978, the public attention to incest has generated a lucrative incest recovery industry and a prime-time TV flood of celebrities going public with their experiences of childhood sexual abuse.<sup>46</sup> Armstrong writes:

As a political story, it is a prime illustration of how it is now possible for the powers-that-be to use noise to achieve the same end that was once served by repression. It is a story of how readily the solid feminist concept that "the personal is political" can be alchemistically transformed into *the personal is the—public*. It is, alas, the story as well of the power of the promise of "help" and the language of "treatment" to infantilize massive numbers of women, emphasizing

<sup>46</sup> See also Tavris 1993, Haaken 1998.

their fragility, securing their helplessness, isolating them from the larger universe, so cementing their focus on the purely internal that it looms to fill their entire visual screen. All in the name of "empowerment." (1994, 3; emphasis in original)

*Rocking the Cradle of Sexual Politics* offers a social history of, as well as Armstrong's personal response to, the transformation from "breaking the silence" as a political act to the more consumer-oriented and inward-turning recovery industry dominated by the media, psychiatry, and social work professions that now characterizes much of the discourse on incest and childhood sexual assault.<sup>46</sup> For Armstrong, the problem with the recovery-movement approach to incest is that it blurs significant distinctions between so-called symptoms, such as alcoholism and eating disorders, and the social structural dynamics of patriarchal power that provide the foundation for the persistence of incest and child sexual abuse in contemporary society. The recovery approach, she argues, also reduces the act of breaking the silence and going public to useful steps in the individual healing process. Such a formulation dilutes the original feminist thrust of the "personal as political" and undermines the collective empowerment process designed to effect more systemic social change.<sup>47</sup> To counter both the backlash against the survivors' movement as well as the depoliticized recovery movement, Armstrong argues "there needs to be a greater awareness on the part of adult survivors that their experience is part of a greater social problem, and that they could play a role that can make a difference to children now" (1994, 273–74). Further, "this would require that women reclaim their own experience, and adopt skepticism that one can find empowerment by turning power over to the 'experts.'"

However, when we turn to the process by which "adult survivors need to speak for themselves, out of certainty—not out of therapy," as Armstrong (1994, 273–74) suggests, we face two thorny problems: first, what counts as "one's own language" or unmediated survivor discourse? And, second, is unmediated survivor discourse inherently politically oppositional? These questions highlight the need to explore how survivors from different race, class, and cultural backgrounds and sexual orientations are positioned differently within survivor discourse. For example, the power of what Doane and Hodges call "the official story" embedded in "middle-class discourse"—namely, "a family's private attempts to keep up appearances . . . and celebrations of middle-class family life by the media,

<sup>46</sup> See also Davies 1995.

<sup>47</sup> See also Tallen 1990.

church, and state"—contributes to "self-silencing" and "internalization of the perpetrator's voice" and constrains middle-class survivors from speaking out (2001, 102–3). The presumption that working-class families have a greater propensity toward violence and inappropriate sexual behavior limits working-class survivors from speaking out for fear that their experiences will further fuel class reprisals. Lesbian survivors have expressed concern that the fact of their childhood sexual abuse has been used to explain their divergent sexuality. The heterosexism of many popular accounts of incest reaffirms this hegemonic construction.<sup>48</sup> Fortunately, lesbian survivors and others have generated oppositional discourse that challenges the heteronormativity of incest narratives to counter the hegemonic story. For example, Ann Cvetkovich examines the queering of incest narratives performed by Margaret Randall's *This Is about Incest* (1987) and Dorothy Allison's *Bastard Out of Carolina* (1992) and emphasizes how "imaginative work . . . can ultimately be more 'healing' than an explicit rendering of the event" (1995, 380).

Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectional approach also offers a strategy to contest essentializing narratives of women's experiences. In her discussion of violence against women of color, Crenshaw illustrates "how the experiences of women of color are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism" (1993, 1243). This intersectional approach is evident in other work by feminists of color who examine the processes by which women of color have been marginalized within the contemporary battered women's movement.<sup>49</sup> I will turn now to address this last issue by focusing on a text that centers on the concerns of black women who are incest survivors. Some of the most powerful survivor narratives are written by African-American and working-class authors. In their analysis of incest narratives, Doane and Hodges (2001) highlight the work of authors Ralph Ellison (1952) and Toni Morrison ([1970] 1994). Doane and Hodges argue that these authors effectively help reroute "the responsibility for incest from marginalized and poor people to those whose social status and authority allow them to commit acts of incestuous violence and to silence speech about them" (5).

#### Locating diverse positions within the discourse

In this section, I focus on the text *Crossing the Boundary: Black Women Survive Incest*, written by Melba Wilson (1994). This book is simulta-

<sup>48</sup> See Blessing 1992; Wilson 1994; and Champagne 1996.

<sup>49</sup> See, e.g., Lin and Tam 1994; Park 1998.

neously a personal narrative, a cultural and sociological analysis, and a self-help text. Wilson also offers guidance for "negotiating the professional incest industry" and for "survivors as professionals." The author starts from her experience as a black woman, feminist, and incest survivor. Originally written for black men and women in a British context, the U.S. edition includes two pages of resources listing U.S. psychotherapists, newsletters, health centers, and self-help groups. Wilson reviews and debunks myths about incest in black communities, black women's sexuality, and women loving women. Of particular interest is the attention she gives to the cultural productions of black women. She devotes one of her seven chapters to the ways in which black women writers have dealt with the topic of incest.<sup>60</sup> She recalls that she "began to realise that it is *only* in the work of these women that incest, and other forms of sexual abuse and violence against black women, appears consistently as a subject that concerns us as black people, and that ought to be on our agendas as communities" (38). Wilson expresses gratitude to "these women for having the courage to break the taboo of silence, an outgrowth of which was to reach out to women like me, who needed their stories in order to find the strength to tell our own" (40).

Wilson highlights the significance of centering race and gender in an analysis of incest, something that few authors have accomplished, and of understanding different constraints. Wilson weaves her own story throughout the text, offers a sensitive articulation of the ways racism and sexism shape black women's experience of incest more generally, and places specific constraints on their speaking out about the abuse.<sup>61</sup> While her definition of black feminism—"maintaining a physical, mental, spiritual and emotional well-being, as well as economic, political and social opportunities on an equal basis with men" (121)—does not seem to differentiate it from other forms of liberal feminism, she incorporates the

<sup>60</sup> Wilson discusses *Gwendolen* by Buchi Emecheta (1990), *The Color Purple* by Alice Walker (1982), *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* by Maya Angelou (1969), *The Unbelonging* by Joan Riley (1985), and *Baka-Face and Other Gwaara Stories* by Opal Palmer Adisa (1986).

<sup>61</sup> Wilson acknowledges that she did not "know at the time (or, in fact, until much later) that" what her father did to her when she was eleven or twelve "was called incest; or that it was abuse; or that it was punishable by law; or that it was something you survived" (1994, 26). As she takes us through the text, incorporating the events, writers, and coping strategies that helped her identify and then heal from the incest, she reveals how she came to understand how her father's sexual abuse had a profound influence on her sexual development and personal life. Unlike exclusively personal narratives, however, her own story is used as a backdrop to her larger analysis, brought in almost as anecdotal evidence for the more general points she makes.

ways sexism and homophobia are embedded in black communities and, therefore, offers a more intersectional feminist analysis. She captures the challenge black women face when reporting incest as follows: "If a woman does take action, and goes to the police for example, she is likely to be condemned by her own community for betrayal and to have her own sexuality called into question by the wider community, thus reinforcing the stereotypes. If she doesn't, she is left with maintaining the silence which gives tacit approval to the abuse, and thus undervalues her own worth as a participating and *equal* member of the community" (133; emphasis in original).

Wilson's analysis underscores the importance of locating survivors and survivor discourse within diverse communities and of understanding the problems different survivors face as they attempt to go public. She points out that "the experiences of white survivors are . . . automatically assumed to hold true for black survivors of incest and child sexual abuse" (169). She also specifically addresses the concerns of lesbian incest survivors within a generally homophobic black community (81–85). She reports: "Though no one I spoke with felt they were lesbian because of their experiences of incest, many raised the issue of an inability to trust men as a contributing factor" (83). Wilson also points out that heterosexual black women that she spoke with also expressed a lack of trust in men; however, she highlights the particular difficulty for black lesbians who come out as incest survivors within the black community. More often than not lesbians who come out as incest survivors must also face the inevitable question of whether one's lesbianism is a direct consequence of the abuse, that "if only we could somehow resolve our difficulties with men, we will no longer be lesbians" (84).

While Wilson does not analyze how black women from diverse class backgrounds might deal differentially with the process of healing from and fighting against incest, she does begin to articulate how racism shapes when and how black women might speak out against incest in their communities. She calls for "a dialogue about sexual abuse in black communities" (159) that "must, should, start one-to-one in families, and spread outward" (161). She concludes with two key recommendations that would increase sensitivity to black women's experiences of incest: "(a) a closer look at social and cultural factors in child sexual abuse; and (b) more direct input by black women survivors into the therapeutic process for dealing with it" (170). However, she does not offer specific strategies for accomplishing these broad-based goals.

For Wilson, as for many who write about healing from incest, the primary solution lies within the therapeutic process. While she includes



the names and addresses of self-help, mutual aid, and twelve-step groups for incest survivors in her list of resources, her recommendations for healing center on professional, expert solutions. She calls for changes within the professional therapeutic establishment as well as the black community but fails to highlight more collective strategies for healing and challenging abuse in black communities and beyond. As a consequence, her text is simultaneously critical of and supportive of expert models for intervention—albeit sensitized by attention to social and cultural factors. Wilson's text straddles both expert and survivor discourse in a complex presentation. On the one hand, by incorporating the ways in which sexism, racism, and homophobia circumscribe the lives of black women, especially those who have experienced childhood sexual abuse, Wilson offers a more politicized analysis than is found in most self-help and personal narratives. On the other hand, by centering psychotherapy as the primary site in which survivors of incest and childhood sexual assault can find healing, Wilson also participates in the continued reprivatization of survivor discourse. However, as bell hooks (1993) stresses in *Sisters of the Yam: Black Women and Self-Recovery*, "the more black women work on our self-recovery, increasing our self-esteem, ridding our lives of debilitating stress, rejecting the learned impulse to try and meet everyone's needs, the less we will be seduced into co-dependency" (76). Furthermore, hooks notes that no black woman she knows "is engaged in the process of self-recovery who is not also involved with rethinking the sexist attitudes towards women that are the norm in this society" (157). This view resists positioning personal and collective empowerment as mutually exclusive. On the contrary, they are seen as interdependent processes of healing, politicization, and resistance. In fact, it can be argued that personal healing and individual competence building are necessary for achieving collective empowerment, and therefore the two processes cannot be disentangled (Scott 1991; Naples 1998).

### **Negotiating mediation when going public**

The extent to which a survivor may choose to go public as a survivor is also infused with dynamics of race, gender, sexuality, culture, location, and personal history. What can be spoken and how it is framed are further influenced by the context in which the public disclosure takes place. Sociologist Norman Denzin (1990) argues that the very organization of public disclosure is subject to such "glossing" effects that there may be little hope for pure, unmediated speech to survive. Again, the dominance of the recovery industry over the shape and content of survivor accounts

greatly inhibits the development of an unmediated and oppositional survivor discourse.<sup>52</sup> As Elayne Rapping argues, "the new language [of twelve-step groups and self-help books] is devoid of the kind of political inferences which colored the feminist and New Left ideas from which it ultimately sprung" (1996, 107).

In a postmodern attempt to counter such unselfconscious glossing of experience and to engage the reader more actively in the process—"thus projecting more of themselves into it, and taking more away from it"—Carol Ronai (1995, 396) presents her experiences of childhood sex abuse through a layered account that weaves personal memories with sociological analysis and statistical data. Ronai's creative text illustrates how survivor accounts can be infused with "the psychological literature on recovery" but that survivors can find that such "frames are useful" (1995, 396). As a sociologist, she is critical of the dominance of individualist recovery discourse, yet she admits that these narratives reflect her experience. She negotiates the tension between her experiences of incest, the comfort she finds in certain recovery literature, and her sociological training by challenging the form of producing and writing her account.<sup>53</sup>

In an effort to avoid the problem of expert mediation and such "glossing" effects, some survivors have turned to twelve-step groups, where they interact in a context in which all members share a common status. However, many critics argue that the recovery discourse generated by twelve-step groups also shapes the subject and, therefore, glosses over the individual's experience.<sup>54</sup> For example, Denzin argues that in these groups, the lived experiences of the subject are reified in categories not of their own creation.<sup>55</sup> Contesting this reading of twelve-step groups, incest sur-

<sup>52</sup> See Denzin 1990; Tallen 1990; and Armstrong 1994.

<sup>53</sup> Denzin provides a very different reading of recovery texts. He distrusts the entire recovery industry, which he finds typified by the sensationalism surrounding celebrities who go public with stories about their abusive childhoods, their alcoholism, and other personal difficulties. He examines the "coming out" stories of celebrities who are adult children of alcoholics or recovering alcoholics and concludes that texts that describe their experiences reflect the following levels of glossing: "first-hand, lived experience glosses; second-order, printed stories people tell others, and third-order glosses, those given in the daily news" (1990, 14).

<sup>54</sup> See also Denzin 1990; Reinerman 1995; and Rapping 1996.

<sup>55</sup> Armstrong (1994) and other feminist writers (e.g., Tallen 1990) are especially critical of twelve-step approaches for incest survivors and other women-centered issues but for reasons that differ significantly from Denzin's. For Denzin, the risk of taking one's personal troubles into a public arena includes entering a place where "nothing is any longer private or sacred" (1990, 13). In contrast, the feminist formulation "the personal is political" insists

vivor Judy Lincoln responds to an article in *Survivor Resource Chronicle* that criticized twelve-step groups: "S.I.A. [Survivors of Incest Anonymous] is a 12-step program. It has all of the above recovery tools in it. It is run by survivors. Everything it has to offer is SUGGESTED! It doesn't say you have to forgive. Forgiveness is a choice! It speaks of a higher power and you interpret that for yourself. Your perception of God is up to you. . . . I am proud to be a 12-stepper. We do care, and we know what we are doing!" (1990, 3). However, even if we appreciate that members experience their recovery through twelve-step groups as personally empowering, the twelve-step format explicitly discourages collective political engagement, which is a foundational element for social change.<sup>66</sup> Such a stricture against social change efforts is especially troublesome to feminists, who perceive twelve-step groups as inhibiting the development of a survivors' movement.

After considering the twelve steps developed for Sexual Abuse Anonymous, Armstrong asks: "If this were a Twelve-Step program designed by rapists, could they have improved on this program of sin and redemption (sin, yours; redemption task, yours)?" (1994, 220). Again, Armstrong considers such an approach to be highly depoliticized and one that poses no challenge to the abusive patriarchal order.<sup>67</sup> In opposition to the individual and apolitical solutions that mark the twelve-step approach, survivor-generated organizations and feminist CR groups can pose explicitly political challenges to the dominant expert and recovery discourse on childhood sexual abuse. Not surprisingly, such approaches also present their own challenges and limitations.

### **Survivor-generated sites for the production of discourse and survivors praxis**

Survivor-generated organizations and newsletters have the potential for creating a network among survivors that could broaden into a wider political movement. For example, VOICES (Victims of Incest Can Emerge Survivors) in Action, Inc., was founded in 1980 by Diane Carson and several survivors of child sexual abuse and their allies; the group sponsors conferences, publishes a newsletter, and provides referrals for self-help

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that the personal is inherently and unavoidably political. The challenge for feminist praxis is to develop a collective process that contests how dominant discourse masks the way personal issues are politically constituted.

<sup>66</sup> See, e.g., Rapping 1996.

<sup>67</sup> See also Tallen 1990.

groups and therapists. However, these organizations frequently remain tied to the recovery industry or emphasize individual personal testimony and education over collective action. The July/August 2002 issue of the *Chorus*, the newsletter published by VOICES in Action, includes a number of articles on sexual abuse by priests. Therapist Stephen Braveman calls for "educating others about childhood sexual abuse" (2002, 10). The issue also includes a book review of *Set Us Free: What the Church Needs to Know from Survivors of Abuse* (Annis, Loyd-Paige, and Rice 2001), a study of sixty-seven victims of abuse by priests. The reviewer emphasizes one suggestion for change: "Pastors should speak out from the pulpit about abuse, about the denial of many churches to hear victim's complaints" (Blair 2002, 9). None of the articles encourage a more activist response by church members or other interested parties.

The stated purpose of *Incest Survivor Information Exchange*, another publication for survivors, "is to provide a forum for female and male survivors of incest to publish their thoughts, writings and art work and to exchange information. We encourage articles, poems, graphics, and one or two lines about who you are or how you are or what you think" (1990, 23). Such a forum fosters individual expression and diverse perspectives on various issues that seldom coalesce into particular political strategies to attack abuse against women and children. In my survey of newsletters from both of these groups, I could find no discussion of the different challenges women of color and working-class women face in coming to voice as survivors or healing from incest. Little attention was given to the concerns of lesbian survivors of incest and child sexual abuse, although there were a number of columns devoted to male survivors. Given the lack of attention to issues of race, class, and sexual orientation, and to political action, these survivor organizations fail to articulate a feminist political praxis to contest the deep-seated social problem of child sexual abuse and backlash against survivors who speak out. However, they provide important information and support for many survivors.

A somewhat different approach is evident in the more explicitly political representation of "Looking Up," a Maine-based organization founded in 1983 by survivors Gayle Woodsum and Barbara Bostad. However, Looking Up describes itself as a nonprofit service organization with the philosophy

that each individual is already in possession of the qualities necessary to create a life filled with growth and satisfaction. The nontraditional programs offered through "Looking Up" provide survivors with opportunities that, according to Woodsum, "those who abused them

made certain were not ever available to them. The most important of those opportunities are to speak the truth, be heard and believed; to be accepted without judgment; to know that isolation has been enforced and can now be broken; to understand that the abuse and its effects [are] the fault of offenders and not victims; to catch the first glimpse that life can be worth living." (*Survivor Resource Chronicle* 1990, 8)

In contrast to the individual recovery and service orientation of the statement of philosophy, the lead article, by Lina Dunning, in the same issue in which this statement appeared, was titled "Fighting Back." According to editor Dunning, survivors "must not lose sight of the enormous courage it takes to speak out to be a part of the movement against violence" (1990, 1). Since the organization constructs itself primarily through the dominant social service and recovery approach that inhibits political action, it does not outline the political strategies needed to counter the social structural dimensions of violence against women and children, nor does it provide a forum in which such strategies could be articulated and debated.

If survivor narratives are easily co-opted by expert mediation or inward-turning recovery solutions (even when these narratives are generated within survivor organizations), how can they form the basis of a more politically progressive and oppositional praxis? In her article "Talkin' Bout a Revelation: Feminist Popular Discourse on Sexual Abuse," Debi Brock argues that "women who reveal themselves to have been sexually abused when young risk having this become constructed as the crux of their identity—considered the formative experience of who they are." She then asks, "How then can women try to take control over their own lives by speaking about their experiences of sexual abuse?" (1990, 14). This query mirrors concerns raised by Alcoff and Gray (1993) and Armstrong (1994). In the next section, I explore the processes through which survivors and feminist allies can contribute to a politically progressive and oppositional survivors' praxis. I highlight the challenges of such an endeavor.

### **Consciousness-raising and oppositional survivors praxis**

Feminist theorists who support CR groups as a site for politicization of personal experiences highlight the ways in which consciousness-raising processes help contest dominant discourses.<sup>68</sup> However, as hooks (1984)

<sup>68</sup> See Weedon 1987

points out, CR strategies do not necessarily provide the context through which participants can recognize how social structural dynamics such as capitalism, colonialism, and racism shape their experiences. Furthermore, since CR groups are developed in and through local networks, members may not discover the diversity of experiences that organize women's lives and consequently marginalize women of different racial/ethnic, class, and cultural backgrounds. The lack of diversity within specific CR groups circumscribes their potential as sites through which to develop a broad-based survivors' movement.

With the lessons learned from past experiences with CR groups, with the growth of self-help and mutual aid models of engagement among survivors, and with greater sensitivity to dynamics of race, class, and sexuality in differentially shaping women's experiences, we can revision consciousness-raising as a strategy for the development of oppositional survivor praxis. Consciousness-raising as a product of a self-reflective dialogue between survivors of childhood sexual assault does not guarantee the development of a "higher" form of consciousness, nor does it necessarily lead to political action. An engaged political struggle is required for survivors to theorize their own experience. Through such engaged collective struggle, individual expressions of experience are put up against others' expressions in the context of generating collective resistance strategies that further clarify how personal experiences are organized in and through relations of ruling. In this way, we are prevented from viewing personal experiences as particularist expressions and resist the tendency to generalize from them.<sup>59</sup> The materialist feminist approach I adopt is one that engages with concrete political struggles and in collective efforts to develop resistance strategies. It also requires the collaboration of feminist allies, as well as survivors, in efforts to generate a diverse coalition politics; such alliances can provide the basis for a broad-based resistance to backlash against survivors who speak out and against the systems of oppression that contribute to the persistence of child sexual abuse.

The approach I recommend cannot be adopted in isolation. It requires a process of reflection embedded in engaged conversations or dialogues among survivors and allies, among those who claim the identity of survivor and those who do not. It is a process enacted in the world, in dynamic relationship with struggles of people who are "actually located; . . . active; . . . at work; [and] . . . connected with particular other people in various

<sup>59</sup> Susan Friedman, quoting R. Radhakrishnan, also argues for the value of "relational narratives" for "a new kind of 'coalitional politics' based on 'relationality as a field-in-process'" (Radhakrishnan 1989, 311, cited in Friedman 1995, 40).

ways" (Smith 1992, 91). Self-help, CR, and therapy groups all provide the contexts in which survivors and allies can contest limited medical and psychiatric analyses of survivors, individualist theories of incest and childhood sexual abuse, and disempowering healing strategies. Proscriptions against explicitly political analyses and activism within certain self-help and twelve-step groups need not deter survivors and allies from engaging in such activity. Survivor organizations need not be primarily vehicles for the reproduction of depoliticized recovery discourse or individualist analyses of survivors' experiences. In fact, I believe that any collective forum offers the potential for survivors to recognize each other and move beyond personal sharing that must, by necessity, form the basis for movement toward an oppositional stance. The materialist feminist strategy I recommend takes the process of reflective dialogue as part of these ongoing political struggles in which survivors and their allies orient toward progressive social change.

### Conclusion

Expanding the constituency of those who are contributing to the construction of an oppositional survivor discourse is key to the political viability of a progressive survivors' movement. Feminist CR group strategies and reflective dialogue among survivors remain central to this process of reconceptualization. However, if we are to assess the limits as well as the possibilities of such activities for the development of oppositional discourse and political practice, we must explore how relations of ruling operate in and through these shifting and complex sites. Recognizing the diversity of ways survivors of child sexual abuse come to voice also expands the horizon of sites through which women engage in local conversations and come to voice about their experiences. In addition, it is important to recognize that allies as well as survivors of abuse can participate in creating resistance strategies and oppositional politics.<sup>60</sup>

This dialogic materialist feminist approach retains the "process of reflective practice" (Alcoff 1988, 425) in the creation of survivors' narratives and makes evident the struggle for self-definition.<sup>61</sup> It also offers a strategy for broadening the voices and diversity of perspectives that can contribute to a politically oppositional survivor discourse. This approach counters the tendency toward the representation of sexual abuse as "a monolithic category and a totalizing discourse which blurs women's experiences"

<sup>60</sup> See also Champagne 1996.

<sup>61</sup> See also Bernstein 1992.

(Brock 1990, 14) and ignores the diversity of women's experiences across the intersectional terrain of race/ethnicity, class, sexualities, and cultures. Such a political goal involves a commitment to ongoing dialogue among survivors as well as the creation of processes that are open to reconceptualization and contestation. The transformative possibilities of such dialogue are linked to explicitly political struggles. Survivor discourse need not be reified in individual survivor narratives nor co-opted by apolitical recovery strategies nor limited by segregated and fragmented local contexts. By locating survivor discourse in the material as well as the discursive context, we can develop more effective strategies for a broad-based and politically oppositional survivors' movement. This strategy also facilitates linking the struggles against childhood sexual assault to broader feminist movements in such a way that new voices and new analyses can be inserted into the political process.

Feminist allies must continue to recognize the value of speaking out and the generation of personal testimony by survivors for processes of personal empowerment. Personal empowerment is the necessary stepping-stone toward building a more inclusive movement. Furthermore, going public forms the very grounds for collective dialogues among us.<sup>62</sup> Twelve-step groups and survivor-generated newsletters and organizations also provide an important context in which survivors can come to identify the collective and social structural conditions that shape individual experiences of childhood abuse. While we need to acknowledge the limits of such strategies, we should also honor the needs they fulfill for survivors who have long suffered with their memories and pain in silence and isolation. Breaking the silence endures as a foundational strategy through which survivors can challenge the continued denial of abuse that occurs within the patriarchal family and other institutions in contemporary society.

The processes through which survivor discourse is generated, as well as the institutional and social location of survivors as authors of their own lives, shape the extent to which survivor discourse stands in opposition to oppressive expert discourse. Furthermore, in some cases such a separation between expert and survivor sets up a false dichotomy. Not all discourse generated from the social and institutional location of experts is inevitably oppressive, especially if we acknowledge the value of feminist theoretical and political perspectives.<sup>63</sup> Feminist praxis remains central to the development of an oppositional survivors' movement and

<sup>62</sup> See Love 1991

<sup>63</sup> See, e.g., Brown 1994, 1996, Quirk and DePrince 1996.



provides the grounds for linking this movement with other struggles to contest the dynamics of oppression in contemporary society.

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## A Conversation with Cynthia Enloe: Feminists Look at Masculinity and the Men Who Wage War

Cynthia Enloe and I (Carol Cohn) first met in Finland in the frigid January of 1987. We were among women from more than twenty countries who had gathered for a forum on women and the military system—and we turned out to be sharing the government-run Siuntio Health Spa with a group of World War II veterans and their families.<sup>1</sup> Cynthia's pathbreaking 1983 book on the militarization of women's lives titled *Does Khaki Become You?* illuminated the lives of members of both groups and, in many ways, opened the conceptual space for our international forum to take place.<sup>2</sup> A year later the U.S. edition of Cynthia's *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* came out (Enloe 1990).<sup>3</sup> It turned many of the assumptions in the academic study of international politics on their head, revolutionizing our ideas of what should even "count" as "international politics," illuminating the crucial role played by notions of "masculinity" and "femininity" in international relationships, and sparking a vibrant project of feminist critique, research, and theorizing in the study of international relations.<sup>4</sup>

As colleagues in the small world of feminist international relations theorists, we have had many occasions since 1987 to discuss our overlapping interests in militaries, masculinities, international organizations, and gendered conceptions of security. In the spring of 2002, we sat down at my kitchen table to explore the directions feminist analysis of international

We would like to thank Sandra Harding and Kate Norberg for inviting us to have this conversation and for offering such good ideas along the way.

<sup>1</sup> Some of the papers from the forum were collected in Isaksson 1988.

<sup>2</sup> For Enloe's most recent work on women and the military, see Enloe 2000.

<sup>3</sup> See also Enloe 1993, 2001–2.

<sup>4</sup> There is now a Feminist Theory and Gender Studies section in the International Studies Association. The journal launched by its members, the *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, is an excellent location for exploring some of this new scholarship.



politics might take in the changed, and unchanged, post-September 11 world.

*Carol Cohn (CC)*: Cynthia, what do you think we still don't know enough about in the realm of international politics?

*Cynthia Enloe (CE)*: Like you, I, of course, see the "international" as embedded in the national and in the local. And, like you, I also see—or, better, have been taught by other feminists to see—the "political" in many spaces that others imagine are purely economic, or cultural, or private. With those provisos, I think we really don't know enough about how masculinity operates; but to carry on that exploration, we have to be at least women's studies-informed. This is not masculinity studies.

*CC*: Because understanding the dynamics of masculinity requires being curious about the complex workings of femininity?

*CE*: Yes, I really believe that. I think more and more about marriages, about particular masculinities—especially of the sort that states think they need—about how they're being confirmed by women in their roles as wives. Those women, of course, are not always willing to fulfill the state's needs! Your own classic article about the American male intellectuals who designed cold war nuclear strategies is so revealing about the ways in which certain forms of masculinity get confirmed by certain highly defective modes of discourse (Cohn 1987, 1993). You were surrounded by men and operating as a sort of mole in a hypermasculinized subculture. But looking back, do you think it mattered that you were a *feminist* scholar doing this research on cold warrior discourse?

*CC*: When I was there, I tried very hard to shed my analytic lenses—even though we all know this is never completely possible—and to just pay careful attention to what was happening around me. What was clearly important, however, from day one, was that I was a *female* scholar. For example, I think many men were much more willing to talk with me, to answer my "dumb," naive questions with great openness, both because of a kind of genuinely chivalrous generosity and because it was in a sense "normal" for a female to be asking such basic questions. Also, it was relatively easy for me personally to deal with being in the "nonexpert" position. A male colleague who also did interviews with powerful nuclear decision makers told me somewhat ruefully that he and the men he was interviewing would sometimes get into a kind of competitive "who's-the-bigger-expert-here?" deadlock. It was probably quite productive that my relationships with these men did not provoke that kind of dynamic in either one of us!

*CE*: Yes, delving into masculinized cultures does turn the usually mad-

dening presumptions about the "naive little lady" into an advantage—it was easier, though, for me to carry this off back in the days when I used to wear sleeveless sundresses!

I also want to know how the genderings of institutional cultures work inside international aid organizations. I want a feminist analysis of Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, the International Red Cross. This is part of my current interest in what it takes to genuinely *demilitarize* a society—and, the intimately connected question, how do postwar societies manage to reestablish masculinized privilege in their political cultures? These peace-building groups become crucial in any demilitarizing processes. For instance, feminists inside Oxfam UK are asking *both* what Oxfam's postconflict operations' impacts are on local women *and* what are the politics of femininity and masculinity inside Oxfam itself. Suzanne Williams, a British feminist and a longtime staffer inside Oxfam UK, asked me to come up to Oxford last spring for a noontime conversation with about fifty Oxfam staff people. I remember thinking, "Oh, this is my chance!" So I asked, "Okay, group, I don't know enough about Oxfam, so tell me what's the most masculinized of all Oxfam's departments?" They thought a minute, whispered among themselves, and then came up with their answer: the Emergency Aid Department. Why? Because their staff handles water pipes. If you're the ones delivering water to refugee camps, you get the Land Rover first; you're doing the heavy lifting; your daily work is surrounded by the aura of urgency; you're doing a job that calls for technical expertise. Put it altogether and laying water pipes in the Congo or East Timor becomes a distinctly "manly" enterprise. Now it's important to remember, the Oxfam water pipes guys are noncombatant, antimilitarist men, providing essential humanitarian aid to people who have been driven out of their homes and into refugee camps in wartime. A bit later, I asked these smart, worldly, dedicated folks, "Okay, so what's the least masculinized department in Oxfam?" One woman sort of chuckled and ventured, "development education." Everybody in the room sort of nodded, "yeah, yeah." "So, that means it's the most feminized?" "Well, I don't think about it that way, but yes."

CC: You know, in my research at the UN, I've heard the Third Committee of the General Assembly—that's the committee that works on social, humanitarian, and cultural issues—referred to in-house as the "ladies' committee."<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, the Security Council remains an

<sup>8</sup> The other five committees of the General Assembly are the First Committee (disarmament and international security), the Second (economic and financial), the Fourth (special

overwhelmingly male and masculinized preserve, although there have been some very important contributions from women ambassadors in the last few years.

CE: The "ladies' committee" . . . good grief! What you're now uncovering inside the UN makes me all the more convinced that we need to launch explicitly feminist investigations of institutional political cultures. Let's have a feminist analysis of the two International War Crimes Tribunals at the Hague and in Arusha—I wonder if the two are identical? We have Carla del Ponte (Swiss) coming right after Louise Arbor (Canadian), two women chief prosecutors. That is pretty amazing! If we really took them seriously, not just as "remarkable women," what would we reveal about this fledgling new world order—and about what it will take to make the brand new UN International Criminal Court work for women? Could it be that we're on the verge of creating, through the international war crimes tribunals, institutions that are less masculinized than the UN Secretariat, the WTO, the World Bank, or the IMF? How could we *tell*?

CC: That's a really provocative and important question. And I think that the feminist questions you've proposed for monitoring postwar demilitarization are an extremely useful example of how to approach it.<sup>6</sup> So, once we get feminist analyses of international institutional political cultures, what do we have?

CE: A lot more realistic notion of how the world operates. That translates into a far more accurate causal explanation for patriarchy's global malleability.

CC: In my initial conversations with women in NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] around the UN, I've found that if I ask questions like, "What gets in the way of DPKO dealing with gender better?" [DPKO

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political and decolonization), the Fifth (administrative and budgetary), and the Sixth (legal). The Web site <http://www.peacewomen.org> has a very useful guide to the UN system.

<sup>6</sup> Cynthia proposed these at a "A Dialogue between Academics, Activists, and UN Officials" on women, peace, and security, held at the UN on April 11, 2002. The April 11 event was part of a larger continuing NGO-academic-UN dialogue project being organized by Sheri Gibbing at the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF), which Carol has been working on. In addition to Cynthia and Carol, other participants in the April 11 session on Security Council Resolution 1325 included Jennifer Klot (then senior governance adviser at UNIFEM [UN Development Fund for Women], now at the Social Science Research Council [SSRC]), Ann Tickner (director of international studies, University of Southern California), Maha Muna (then at the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, now at UNIFEM), and Iris Marion Young (professor of political science, University of Chicago). For an edited transcript, see <http://www.peacewomen.org>. See also Enloe 2002.

is the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations], the answers first tend to be about individuals—"The guy who headed that operation didn't want to have to have a gender advisor," or "These particular people on the budget committee won't support it," or "That guy didn't make a strong and compelling enough argument to the budget committee," and so on. "Institutional culture" is not usually what they bring up first, although they will, in fact, speak quite pointedly about it when you ask.

CE: Maybe it's because these women are lobbyists, nudging, pressing UN departments to pay attention to women's needs and to give women a seat at the proverbial table. I know this year you've been paying close attention to the UN-focused activists from the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom and other NGOs. Well, if you're a WILPF lobbyist, perhaps you think, "Oh, thankfully X is no longer the deputy head of mission. Now there is somebody who will at least let us in the door." It is also a more hopeful way of thinking. You can imagine, if this man or that woman gets transferred, we can get access to lobby for women's concerns. And that does matter. But I always think about the institutional passivity. Who, when he was evaluated for promotion, never even thought to ask WILPF whether they thought he was an effective UN official? Which institution-wide assumptions or priorities or rewards let him ignore DPKO's gender mandate so cavalierly?

CC: And who made the decision that there needn't be accountability mechanisms regarding implementation of gender mandates? Cynthia, a minute ago you spoke of "patriarchy's global malleability." You are quite purposeful about using the term *patriarchy*. Tell me why?

CE: Well, I can remember the first time I ever heard *patriarchy* used—it terrified me. (*Laughter*) It sounded so ideological, heavy, and—I don't know—all the things that at that age I wasn't. It was Jean Grossholz who used it. Jean was mobilizing people behind the scenes at the first Wellesley conference on women and development, which turned into one of the very early special issues of *Signs*. I think it was 1980. I remember Jean going around and saying to people during coffee breaks, "We *have* to talk about patriarchy." And I thought, "Oh no, not patriarchy—I don't know what patriarchy is, and furthermore, it's not the kind of language I use!" Today I can't imagine trying to think seriously about the constructions of power and the systems by which power is both perpetuated and implemented *without* talking about patriarchy.

When I use *patriarchy* I try to be very clear and to give lots of examples. I try to remember what I was like when I heard Jean use this, and I remember how scary it sounded, right? It certainly sounds scary to many academics and policy makers today who don't want to be seen as an out-

there feminist. I can understand why they would much rather use *gender hierarchies* (that's if they're really tough), or maybe just *gender divisions of labor*, or simply *discrimination*, or *inequality*.

In my teaching and writing, I try to be as precise and as concrete as I can be, which requires an endless curiosity! *Patriarchy* is not a sledgehammer being swung around a raving feminist head. It is a tool; it sheds light at the same time as it reveals patterns of causality.

CC: But let me pursue that a little. If you say "Is X patriarchal?" for people familiar with the term, normally the response would be, "well, of course—find something that isn't!"

CE: Yeah, right.

CC: But what they might mean is simply that men are on top, men are in power. So saying "It's a patriarchy" wouldn't really shed light on the institution. The term is, for lots of people, a thought-stopper. So why does it seem like such a thought-*opening* question to you?

CE: Because it means you have to ask about the daily operations of both masculinity and femininity in relationship to each other. It is not men-on-top that makes something patriarchal. It's men who are recognized and claim a certain form of masculinity, for the sake of being more valued, more "serious," and "the protectors of/and controllers of those people who are less masculine" that makes any organization, any community, any society patriarchal. It's never automatic; it's rarely self-perpetuating. It takes daily tending. It takes decisions—even if those are masked as "tradition." It relies on many women finding patriarchal relationships comfortable, sometimes rewarding. And you and I in our own work have found women who would much rather not rock the patriarchal boat—often for good reasons. Patriarchal structures and cultures have proved to be so adaptable! That's what's prompted me to watch them over time—the British House of Commons, textile companies, the Israeli military, Chilean political parties, Bosnia's and Afghanistan's new governments.

CC: In the two institutions in which I've most recently done work, the word *patriarchy* is never used, but *gender* is all over the place. In the U.S. military, it is *gender integration*. At the UN, it is *gender balance* and *gender mainstreaming*. Although many people see *gender* as a more neutral, less inflammatory word than *patriarchy*, in these institutional cultures, *gender* is apparently often just as alienating and thought-stopping a term, evoking/representing "political correctness." The other thing that strikes me is that, in these institutions where attention to gender has been mandated, it remains an extremely opaque word. At the UN, for example, everyone is supposed to integrate a "gender perspective" in their programs, but many people simply don't have a real clue what that means.

And the training that might make it clearer has been in short supply. But all of that is really about the practical effects of using specific words rather than the actual conceptual or analytic difference between *patriarchy* and a term such as *gender system*.

CE: And I have kept using *patriarchy* because it reminds us that we're investigating power.

CC: You and I have talked about how highly resistant many people in the fields of international politics and international relations are to feminist analyses and to undertaking feminist-informed research. To some degree that's a reflection of the structure of rewards in academic and political institutions.

CE: Right.

CC: But it is also conceptual. Their models were constructed *without* women, and *without* men-as-men, and "inserting gender" then appears both difficult and unnecessary.

CE: I think one needs to start with the unsettling, candid question, "Do I *really* understand what is going on?" Yes?

CC: Yes. But it is often not easy to see that you don't—especially when you are working within a paradigm dominant in your field. What enabled you to see that *you* didn't really know what was going on? What led to *your* "aha!" moment?

CE: It came in fragments. The first glimmer came when I was doing the index for the book right before *Khaki*—that was *Ethnic Soldiers* (Enloe 1980). I learned so much researching it. It was my last nonfeminist book—of course, I didn't know that at the time! Working for four years on *Ethnic Soldiers* taught me always to ask the ethnic question. But I didn't know then to ask the "where are the women?" question.

I can actually picture this. *Ethnic Soldiers* was going to be published by Penguin, which was great because it was going to be a trade paperback, and I had a very socially conscious editor there. At the indexing stage, I was in Norway, on a fellowship at PRIO, the Peace Research Institute of Oslo. This was in October 1979; it began to get dark by midafternoon. I was sitting in a coffee shop near PRIO, with my pink index cards and my green index cards. I was doing the index—the headings, the sub-headings—realizing that indexes were really very political because they reflect what you want to make visible. Feminist pals had been nudging me to read Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born* (1977) . . . and it had had a big impact on me. All of a sudden I had this fantastical imagining—I was sitting there in Oslo as the twilight was dimming, and I imagined Adrienne Rich, whom I had then never met, and never expected ever to meet, would walk into a bookstore. She would see *Ethnic Soldiers* on a

bookshelf, would pull it off and do what (I was then learning) feminist book buyers always do—turn to the index, and go to the W's. She'd find there were no "women" in my W's—only "Walloons," "World War I," and "World War II." And in my fantasy she'd immediately put the book back on the shelf.

CC: (*Laughter*)

CE: I was at the post-page-proof stage, so I couldn't go back and rewrite anything in *Ethnic Soldiers*. I just prayed "Please, dear God, maybe I mentioned women *someplace* in this 500-page typescript?" And I found, by luck, I had used it—twice. Once when thinking (briefly!) about Nepali women married to Gurkhas, and again when thinking about the Rhodesian white-dominated regime starting—in desperation—to enlist white women into their military, rather than recruiting more black men.

CC: Two things immediately strike me about this story. First, *there's* the question you've asked ever since—"Where are the women?"! Second, you started by saying that one needs to ask, "Do I really understand what is going on?" But, of course, in the story you just told, asking that question wouldn't have helped, would it? You didn't think that you didn't know what was going on when you wrote that book, right?

CE: You're right.

CC: It was actually a very different process that got you there—a social one, just as grad students' questions are socially shaped by their relations to professors, their departments, job markets. In this case, you imagined someone whom you admired and what her reaction to your book might be.

CE: My fantasizing about Adrienne Rich in a bookstore didn't immediately change my writing or my research. But soon after that I was being pushed by the wonderful students at Clark to start teaching a comparative politics of women course. I think that the embarrassment I felt as I imagined Adrienne Rich's curiosity and *her* dismay at my lack of awareness made me a little more open to students' suggestions. Soon I began to let my teaching—and I love to teach—really begin to affect my research more. So sometimes embarrassment is really fruitful! Then there are also friends. It was feminist friends' encouragement that led me to start reading things I hadn't been reading, far from political science though deeply political.

CC: I love the idea of "*fruitful* embarrassment." What do you think are the social contexts that make that possible?

CE: I've thought about this a lot, and I know you have, too. It's about this thing called a "career." How to not position oneself holding a Plexiglass shield in front of you. How to gain confidence from expressing

surprise, how to gain confidence from admitting, "I should have thought of that, and I didn't!" From very early on in this thing called a career, I've tried very hard not to act out of defensiveness. It's so demobilizing, draining of energy, and privatizing; it doesn't let one listen well enough, or reach out, or be part of a community. Defensiveness plays right into the narrowest, least fruitful form of careerism. Careers are okay, in the sense that one wants to grow, to have the sense that you are moving forward in your own thinking—even having a bit more influence along the way, if it's a good kind of influence—in one's own little pool. But *careerism*—that is about, "Oh, I better not let anybody see what I don't know." Or, "I better pretend that I know more than I do"—and we all have those feelings. But I really try not to let that be what I express. Once I try to express the curiosity, and the, "Gee, I never thought of that, tell me more, I need to rethink that"; once I express it, even if it is not what is going up and down my spinal cord, it's easier to actually do it.

I remember once doing a noontime thing at Harvard, for the Department of Political Science. A senior male faculty member was there; everyone was very aware that he was there and that he didn't usually come to anything that had women or "feminism" in it. He asked a question, a little skeptical, a little amused. You could almost feel a collective shiver go down the spines of everyone in the room as they together silently thought: "Oh my God, what if she doesn't measure up?" Everyone was thinking, "We're having a feminist talk at Harvard. We need its credibility, its senior male faculty's credibility to insure our own careers." I felt really responsible. So I just turned to everybody before I answered and said, "Breathe. It's okay. We're just having a discussion. This is an interesting question, not a test. We're not in a gladiator arena." We might have been, mind you! But I decided that we would pretend we weren't.

CC: Cynthia, one thing that everyone who knows you comments on is that you are amazingly generous to your feminist colleagues and graduate students. Why are you?

CE: Oh, a lot of people are.

CC: But you are to a remarkable degree. Why?

CE: Because I think we're all in this together. Because I know that 95 percent of everything I know, I know because somebody else has done the work. I'm totally dependent on other people feeling confident enough, empowered enough, energized enough, and funded enough that they can do the work that will help make me smarter. Also, I actually want to have a lively set of experiences with people. It makes academic life more fun; it makes it more interesting; it's worth doing it. I'm not the sort who wants to go to a log cabin in the woods and think my own shallow thoughts by



myself. This means it really matters to me to change institutions, to change the cultures in our departments, in ways that give people who are coming along, just like other people did for me, a sense that, together, you can change cultures; you don't have to buy into it. I think about institutional cultures a lot. I think they're changeable, though it's surprising what one has to figure out in order to make those transformations stick. This is why the host of women's caucuses we've all created in so many professional associations, and all the new feminist journals we've launched with their formats and processes self-consciously crafted and nurtured, are so significant. Each and every one of them, I think, are feminist experiments in creating healthier professional institutions—in the process, we're trying to transform the very meanings of "professionalism" and "career."

CC: I've noticed that in your books you draw a lot on works by historians and anthropologists.

CE: I continue to be especially influenced by feminist-informed, historically minded ethnography—no matter what is the writer's formal disciplinary home. At my favorite Cambridge café, I read every publisher's new catalog! I've been influenced by so many feminists using an ethnographic approach: Seung-Kyung Kim's (1997) work on South Korean women factory workers during the prodemocracy campaign; Diane Singerman's (1996) study of women, men, and the state in one Cairo neighborhood; Anne Allison's (1994) terrific participant observation of corporate businessmen's interactions with hostesses in a Tokyo drinking club; Purnima Mankekar's (1999) subtle insights into lower-middle-class Indian men's and women's viewings of nationalist prime-time TV sagas. Oh, and then I love Cathy Lutz's (2001) new study of town life around Fort Bragg—that's the huge army base in North Carolina, Jennifer Pierce's (1995) eye-opening insider's account of how masculinity continues to get privileged in two large San Francisco law firms, and Hugh Gusterson's (1996) ethnography of life in a California nuclear weapons lab. And more! Then I take these and almost literally put them side by side with Joni Seager's (1997) astounding feminist world atlas. Doing this makes me think in thickly local and broadly comparative ways simultaneously. Over the years I also have been deeply affected by Hannah Arendt (Arendt 1951, 1963, 1968, 1972). She was the first to make me rethink just what is "politics." I heard her in person—twice!

CC: You did?

CE: Yes! Talk about formative times! I was an undergraduate at Connecticut College; it was maybe 1958 or 1959? And I had a professor, Louise Holborn, wonderful woman, who was a German emigrée and who was my comparative politics teacher. And she said we all *had* to come, we

who had never heard of Hannah Arendt! Here was Arendt, by this time, an older woman, kind of jowly, with still a very German-accented form of English. I remember this clearly—I *did not* understand what Arendt was talking about, *and* I was absolutely mesmerized. Both! I took notes like crazy. She probably was talking about totalitarianism, at that point in the late '50s. I remember going to the little campus coffee shop afterwards; I just sat and I thought and thought. . . . It was so exciting! Arendt was so serious. I was surrounded by women faculty members who were serious, but I had never seen seriousness like that. . . . I thought it was wonderful! I thought it was just wonderful.

A few years later, out at Berkeley, I took political theory from Sheldon Wolin, a wonderful teacher. He was a great admirer of Hannah Arendt, who in the 1960s—when I was at Berkeley—was writing provocatively rich essays for the *New Yorker* and in the *New York Review of Books*. I tore out each essay and still have every one of them! When I've taught seminars on Hannah Arendt, I've brought those now-yellowing articles into class and said, "You all know what political thought looks like? It has ads down the side. It has cartoons in the middle. It appears on the newsstand. Political theory isn't something that just comes out in a University of Chicago book, that you buy in a serious bookstore. Political theorizing is—well, should be—part of the hubbub of the public arena. See, I get excited even thinking about it! So, the second time I heard Arendt was thanks to Sheldon Wolin. I was a graduate student at Berkeley, and Sheldon Wolin had organized an APSA [American Political Science Association] panel on revolution. Remember, this has got to be in 1963 when we were all talking about theories of revolution. The panelists gave their written papers, then Sheldon Wolin looked out in the audience to start the discussion. There were about fifty people there—it wasn't a featured panel. Wolin spotted Hannah Arendt and called on her. She just stood up in the audience and said, "I've been taking some notes." (*Laughter*) It was great! And out came, of course, the most thought-provoking ideas. I mean, they weren't arrogant; they didn't sort of wash over all the panelists; they were engaged. What I loved was that she was a member of the audience, an audience participant. And that is exactly where political thinkers should be, right? Not just up on the panel, but rising out of the audience. I wish Arendt were still alive, writing in the *New Yorker*!

CC: I wonder what she would have written about September 11? Did the events of September 11 change what you want to be thinking about?

CE: I don't think I'm knowledgeable enough yet to think very clearly about the actual men who took part. I would have to think about where masculinity comes into it, and the way in which masculinity gets mobilized.

"Frontline" on PBS has had some very slow, thoughtful, jigsaw-puzzle kinds of biographies of two or three of the men, and I found them very helpful. To be honest, I—this doesn't mean other people shouldn't be interested—but I myself am not *very* enlivened in my own curiosity about men or women, but especially men, who engage in what is now defined as terrorism. I think I'm quite determined not to be seduced into thinking that those men are more interesting than men who look much more conventional, much more institutionalized, more rational, and *seemingly* nonviolent. There is a temptation—and this is simply the strength of narration—to find Timothy McVeigh or Mohammed Atta much more intellectually engaging than a person who usually goes nameless, for example, who flies—or designs—a B-52 bomber. Curiosity about the rank-and-file terrorist so often distracts us from asking where power really lies. I don't mean that people who engage in murder, singly or multiply, shouldn't be thought about a lot. I am more interested, though, in the Koranic boys' schools. I've been trying to read a lot more about why parents are pleased to have their young sons receive shelter, food, and learning that is valued at these schools. I'm very wary of demonization. I am interested in alienation; I am interested in socialization; I am interested in the larger processes at work without treating individuals as abstractions, as lacking in consciousness.

September 11 engaged my emotions, a sense of horror, and a sense of worry about people I knew in New York. But the terrorists who hijacked those three planes? They aren't the main objects of my curiosity, because I think they are more the symptom than the cause. And I think ultimately they are nowhere near as capable of affecting our ideas, our lives, the structures and cultures in which we live, as a lot of other people who look not very narratively interesting. I'm pretty interested in bland people, people whose blandness is part of what's interesting about them—the rank-and-file men in conventional armies, the women who work as secretaries in aerospace corporations. Or Kenneth Lay, the CEO of Enron; nobody till last winter thought he was as interesting as Timothy McVeigh. I'm interested in Kenneth Lay and the culture he and his colleagues helped create that destroyed everybody's pensions. So, yes, I put up a bit of an intellectual firewall between my curiosity and certain popular—and state-crafted—diversionary narratives. When reporters phone to talk about, for instance, women terrorists, I try to lead them to consider other, more politically fruitful puzzles.

CC: Interest in the Koranic schools, the *madrassas*, fits right in with your interest in institutions—both in how different kinds of masculinity are constructed within institutions and in how masculinity is mobilized

to meet the institutions' ends. But the question of what is the difference between somebody who goes through those *madrassas* and engages in these violent acts versus someone who goes through the same school and doesn't—that is not especially interesting to you?

CE: For me, no. But I'm not saying my interests are what everybody should be interested in. Some of the best pieces of reporting in recent months coming out of Afghanistan in the midst of the bombing were by a *New York Times* journalist named Amy Waldman. I'm going to have to write her a fan letter! She wrote such smart analyses of how the warlord system works (Waldman 2001). I'm very interested in warlords, in warlordism. A lot of men are oppressed by warlords, yet other men really get a sense of pride and satisfaction, as well as rifles and daily food, by attaching themselves to the coattails of men who thereby become warlords. Warlords have much in common with American party machine bosses. Well, Amy Waldman paid serious attention to women in these processes that have nurtured warlordism—and also the Taliban regime—and Al Qaeda. She asked, whom did these men *marry*? The foreigners, particularly the Arab men who had come to Afghanistan as Al Qaeda fighters, and the Afghan, mainly Pashtun, men who became part of the Taliban—whom did they *marry*? How did these men construct their own notions of themselves as masculine? A certain kind of warrior ethic and identity requires a man to be deliberately celibate, while other warrior cultures put a premium on the warrior-as-husband. Amy Waldman started going around the neighborhoods, talking with women and men, about the process by which young women were pressured into marriages with Taliban and Arab men. She found that some mothers and fathers had been given money in order to give up their daughters to be wives of Afghan and Arab fighters, though oftentimes the parents didn't feel like they had a choice.

So I thought, all right, let's talk about warlordism and marriage as if that connection actually mattered, as if marriage also were a transaction of power that created a social system that allowed the Al Qaeda Arab male fighters, the Afghan Taliban fighters, and the anti-Taliban Afghan warlords (the U.S. allies)—each to confirm their masculinities in wartime. And let's ask who were these women and how did they cope with it? And how did their fathers and uncles and brothers think about it? This was one of those articles that turned on a lot of lights. It reminded me that to make sense of any militarized social system, you *always* have to ask about women. They're not a minor sidebar interest.

CC: What other questions did your feminist curiosity turn to as being really important questions to ask—not just in relation to the events of September 11, but everything that has come after?

CE: Looking at U.S. society, I became intrigued with the gendered sprouting of American flags. Thinking about them pushed me to think about, on the one side, private emotions, particularly grief, grief for people whom you don't know, and, on the other side, constructions, reconstructions, and perpetuations of a militarized nation. The connection can only be fathomed if one asks feminist questions. Back in that October I happened to be talking to a woman at a campus social gathering. A staff woman came up to say "hi." She had on her lapel one of those jeweled American flags. I didn't look at it and grimace—it would be terrible if I had. Still, she immediately said, "Oh, you know I'm wearing this not to say anything political, but I had to find some way to express my sadness, and my feelings of solidarity with the people who've lost so much." I was very embarrassed that she felt she had to explain her wearing the flag pin to me. Did I come across as judgmental?

Later I thought that maybe especially people who don't have much power—certainly many women who are in staff support positions in universities don't have much power to shape the expression of ideas and meanings—maybe they have to search for a way to make a public expression of grief that won't be misinterpreted—that somebody else won't co-opt, expropriate, exploit. Women are in that position so often, and so are a lot of men without power, but women are in that position so often because—and this comes back to patriarchal cultures—because their *ideas* about grief are not taken very seriously. Their *expressions* of grief are treated as important symbolically, but not their *ideas* about grief, and certainly not their ideas about the relationship of grieving to public policy. So in that circumstance, how does a woman reduce her complex ideas to a pin she wants to wear on her lapel?

CC: How have your reflections on the relations between grief and patriotism shaped your approach in your public talks since September 11?

CE: I try to talk about grieving, about the multiple forms of security, what feminists have taught us about "national" and "security." I try to describe other countries where people see as strange what Americans take to be normal.

CC: Such as?

CE: The presumption that the military as an institution is the bulwark of "national security"—it's not just a U.S. idea, but it's such a distinctively American late-twentieth-, early twenty-first-century presumption. It certainly is not, however, a Canadian presumption, not an Italian presumption, not a German or Japanese presumption. And then I try to suggest how asking *feminist* questions helps me make sense of things that otherwise are very puzzling. I want to present feminist questions as a tool.

And usually I'll try to get them to talk about the images they've seen of Afghan women, and did they know that there are Afghan feminists, and why does it seem so hard to take on board the idea of an Afghan feminist organizing, strategizing, analyzing.

CC: What did you think of the "women's week" in presidential politics, when Laura Bush was out talking about Afghan women?

CE: You know, in some ways, I found it very embarrassing, absolutely insulting. It was not Laura Bush's or even George Bush's message. It was White House strategist Karen Hughes's message, her effort to close the gender gap between Democrats and Republicans.

CC: Yet in some ways, it seemed to work for them. I was struck by all the women who supported U.S. military action, *because* of the condition of Afghan women—something that was news to many of them.

CE: You know, when researching *Bananas*, I became fascinated with the World's Fairs in the 1870s, '80s, and '90s. One of the things that promoted the value of Americans' colonization of the Philippines was expressed in the tableaux that were put up on the midway in the World's Fairs. The "benighted woman," usually carrying a heavy burden, was put there to make the Americans in Chicago going through the midway think, "Oh, that's terrible." The oppression of women, for at least the last 150 years, has been used as a measure of how enlightened a society is, without much deeper commitment to deprivileging masculinity. That's why you have to have a feminist understanding of orientalism.

CC: No one could ever accuse me of being an optimist, but let me push this. Now that the position of women has been publicly inserted in national security discourse, now that it has been rhetorically marked as a supposed concern of male national political elites (no matter what their motivation), do you think there is even the slightest chance that that new discursive legitimacy of talking about "women" and "national security" in the same breath can be used as a wedge for political good?

CE: Here's my *sense*—but we're all going to have to keep watching this. If Afghan women, like Kosovar women, Bosnian women, and East Timorese women, manage to make serious gains in demasculinizing the reconstructed Afghan society, it will not be because of tokenist, exploitative discourse maneuvers by Bush and Blair and others. It will be because, first, Afghan women themselves are organized. Second, because there has been so much serious, feminist-savvy, detailed work going on inside international groups such as Oxfam, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty, as well as inside UN agencies—UNDPKO, UNICEF [United Nations Children's Fund], and the UNHCR [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees]. Most of us in our research and teaching

barely know all the things that you, Cynthia Cockburn and Dubraka Zarkov (2002); Dyan Mazurana and Angela Raven-Roberts (2002a, 2002b; Mazurana, McKay, Carlson, and Kasper 2002); Sandy Whitworth (2003); Julie Mertus (2000); Suzanne Williams (2002); Wenona Giles and Jennifer Hyman (2003); and others are trying to teach us about how feminists have made dents in the masculinist operations of international and local institutions operating in Afghanistan and other "postconflict zones."

CC: My wondering if there could be any positive impact comes from my conversations with NGO activists about Resolution 1325, the UN Security Council's landmark resolution on women, peace, and security, passed in 2000. While the Security Council may have anticipated simply another thematic debate, women's NGOs ran with it; they publicized it, printed and distributed copies of it, and got the word out to women's activist groups in many different countries. So now, 1325 has an active constituency who monitor and push for its implementation. Women's groups are really using it as a tool. For example, in the resolution, the council committed to consult with women's organizations when on field missions. So on the council mission to Kosovo, the women got to meet with the council members and present them a letter critiquing the UN mission's Gender Unit and pass on information they wanted the council to have—although the meeting *did* end up occurring at 11 P.M. in a diplomat's hotel room! Another example—before Lakhdar Brahimi, the UN's special representative to Afghanistan, left New York to start talks about an interim Afghan government, women's NGOs provided him with a list of Afghan women's NGOs they felt he should consult with—and he did. And 1325 isn't just having an impact on UN activities; women are also using it to put pressure on their own governments. I spoke with a woman from the Russian Committees of Soldiers' Mothers, for example, who told me that when they first got the resolution in the mail, they looked, thought, "Oh, just another Security Council resolution," and didn't bother to read it. But later, someone looked—and they've found it to be a gold mine. "Now," she says, "when we go to talk to political or military leaders, we take it with us. And because the Russian leadership is now very concerned about their international legitimacy, they feel that they have to listen to us, because that's what the resolution says."

CE: But that's not a high-tech aerial bombing campaign that's improving women's lives.

CC: Right. But is there the least possibility now of a parallel move? Despite the motivations of the Bush government, could this opening of rhetorical space for talking about women's lives and "national security"

in the same breath be seized upon by women activists for ends that go far beyond the intentions of Bush's policy advisors and speechwriters?

CE: It's really risky for anyone who's trying to understand cause and effect to imagine that the military campaign strategists who were desperate for international legitimacy and thus grasped on to whatever they could—and girls being denied schooling happened to work very nicely, thank you—had that as their strategic objective. Maybe sometimes it's a risk that it's worth feminists taking. After all, we aren't served up many chances to get our foot in the patriarchal door. Still, so many feminist studies of imperialism, colonization, World's Fairs, warfare, the global spreadings of Christian missionary work, and capitalist markets are here to provide us with a blinking yellow cautionary light: that is, when on occasion women's liberation is wielded instrumentally by any masculinized elite as a rationale-of-convenience for their actions, we should be on high alert; they'll put it back on the shelf just as soon as it no longer serves their longer-range purpose.

CC: So, in those weeks after September 11 and before the bombing started, what did you say when you were asked for a feminist response to the question "What should 'we' do now?"

CE: I didn't have it all worked out—I found myself saying, well, first of all, let's really think about what is the *appropriate* response, and what, in the long term, is the most useful response. And especially if we're Americans, let's really think comparatively. Can we learn some lessons from the women of Srebrenica, the Bosnian town where five thousand men were massacred by Serbian militias? Or, what if the September attack had happened in Brussels, seat of the European Union? Would we all assume that the Belgian air force should take to the skies, heading for Southwest Asia? Feminists have taught us to be very, very careful before we adopt a response to grief, loss, and anger that is a *state* response, especially a militarized state response.

What did you say during those weeks?

CC: My starting place was that we needed to analyze *why* military violence seemed like a good response—or why it seemed so impossible not to strike back. We can't take it as self-evident.

I've been very influenced by working with Sara Ruddick on a "feminist ethical perspective on weapons of mass destruction" (Cohn and Ruddick 2002). She has written that the efficacy of violence is overrated, while its costs are consistently underestimated—although I actually believe that more than she does at this point! Anyway, I think that response to September 11 is really a prime example. The seemingly "self-evident" (to a lot of people) need to strike back is partly based on the assumption that



it will “work,” that it will be the most effective form of response. People assume that military violence will, in general, work a lot better than a negotiated political solution or a response based on the enforcement of national or international law or on economic actions.

I think that assumption needs to be examined, challenged. Even if you see the question of whether to use military force as a strategic, pragmatic question, apart from moral consideration, I am not at all sure that it *is* an effective response to terrorists or the causes of terrorism—even from a purely U.S. perspective. What I am sure of is that the human costs will be enormous, including the spread of further violence, and that in the long run the political consequences both for the United States and for many Arab women will be quite damaging.

I think one reason it’s so hard politically to even examine the assumption that “striking back” is the best option is that ideas about masculinity are so intricately and invisibly interwoven with ideas about national security. So-called realist strategic dictums for state behavior sound a lot like dictums for hegemonic masculinity.

CE: You mean, “We have to do something.”

CC: And, “The risks of inaction [read ‘passivity’] are far greater than the risks of action,” and “We have to show we are strong,” and “We have to show them they can’t push us around,” and “We aren’t going to take this lying down,” and “We can’t let them think we are wimps.”

CE: “It’s our honor.” Americans in the early twenty-first century have created what seems to me to be a deadly combination for themselves (ourselves!)—possessing such disproportionate power combined with a cultural sense of being vulnerable. It gives me the shivers.

CC: But I think the problem is more than the sense of being vulnerable. It is the refusal to acknowledge the *inevitability* of our vulnerability. After all, vulnerability is a fact of human and political life. The attempt to deny its inevitability is what has led to the development of weapons of mass destruction “as deterrents,” to massive investments in “national missile defense” and other baroque weapons technology, while we refuse to make serious investments in dealing with the worldwide HIV epidemic, or starvation, or poverty around the world. It has led to U.S. partnerships with oppressive regimes and multiple military attacks on other nations—and another being talked about by the Bush administration even as we speak! And all of these, of course, are part of what creates the desperation and anger that are the seeds of terrorism.

My fantasy is that if we acknowledged the impossibility of making ourselves invulnerable, of constructing Reagan’s Plexiglass shield, we would have to have policies that fostered and strengthened good will and

interdependence, that invested in making the planet a livable place for people in all countries, that aimed at disarmament instead of weapons "advancement" and proliferation. And my fear is that we won't acknowledge it, because these assumptions about strength and weakness, and vulnerability, are simultaneously engaged at the very personal, identity level but also built right into beliefs about national security and into national security doctrine—as though they reflected "objective reality" and in no way stemmed from deeply felt and held identities.

So stopping to try to disentangle emotions and assumptions about violence and its efficacy was the starting place for me. Ultimately, I want to ask what it will take to change the discourse, to alter the meanings of strength and justice in the international political arena?

CE: You know, having conversations like the one we've been having makes me more convinced than ever of the necessity of crafting, and teaching others to craft, a feminist curiosity. And I guess that my conviction comes from our being at a very particular moment in world politics and feminist politics; we're living in a world where American militarized policy carries more clout—disproportionate clout—than ever in world history, while we're also living at a time when feminists in the United States are more conscious than ever that we'll only be able to understand the world if we take seriously the insights of women from Finland to Fiji!

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## Private Pain/Public Peace: Women's Rights as Human Rights and Amnesty International's Report on Violence against Women

In this article, I examine the 2001 report of Amnesty International (AI), titled *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds: Torture and Ill-Treatment of Women*, in relation to women's rights as human rights.<sup>1</sup> I undertake a critical reading of the report in the context of long-standing feminist campaigning against violence against women. I connect the report's findings to feminist efforts to politicize, and therefore make of public concern, all forms of oppression and cruelty toward women, whether this occurs in public or private (i.e., domestic or familial) settings. I argue that the report marks an important development in AI's established strategy for campaigning against the practice of torture by integrating private as well as public forms of violence against women into the general or universal definition of torture.

I explain that this ties issues of private pain to public peace by identifying torture as acts by public officials or private individuals across all settings, including the home and community. This definition of torture adds force to feminist arguments that violence against women is violence against women, regardless of the setting. Patriarchal systems have traditionally classified violence against women as private, denoting its distance, and to some degree protection, from the legal gaze and thereby from accountability and punishment. This is fundamentally an issue of spatial politics,

I am grateful to Edna Aquino for her time and her interest in this research. I would also like to thank the editors and anonymous reviewers of the journal for the detailed and helpful comments that contributed to the clarification of the arguments presented. This project was inspired in part by the methodological innovation of Kathleen B. Jones in her work *Living between Danger and Love: The Limits of Choice* (2000).

<sup>1</sup> The report is one of a series of publications issued by Amnesty International as part of its worldwide campaign against torture launched in October 2000. These include *Hidden Scandal, Secret Shame—Torture and Ill-Treatment of Children* (2000) and *Stopping the Torture Trade* (2001b). On-line versions available as ACT 40/038/2000 and ACT 40/002/2001, respectively, at <http://www.amnesty.org>. Last accessed November 20, 2002.

with private patriarchal power often exerted behind the closed doors of the home and in the private sphere of familial and personal relationships. The protection of the private sphere from the intrusion of public (state) interference has historically worked against women exposed to the excesses of unfettered male dominance and violence.

Feminist campaigns, at the local, national, and international levels, have successfully politicized the private pain suffered by women and indicated that it is a matter of public concern, affecting the nature of society as a whole and the rights and freedoms of all individuals. In this regard, women's rights have come to be explicitly understood and institutionalized as part of human rights.<sup>2</sup> If we are to have a peaceful world where all rights are recognized, then the private pain of violence against women must be taken into account and addressed. There can be no peace in its full sense while violence against women continues.

In what follows, I investigate the specific contributions that the AI report on violence against women has made to this ongoing campaign. My discussion covers the nature of AI as a nongovernmental organization (NGO), its traditional orientation toward the state and public forms of torture, and the role of the report in signaling an expansion in AI's own approach to torture as well as its campaigning role in enlarging the scope of the women's-rights-as-human-rights debate. The AI report challenges, to some extent, AI's own historical focus on a delimited (public) approach to the state and torture, and the campaigning perspectives, organizational structure, and approaches suited to that focus. *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* tells us as much about the gender politics of institutional change within AI as about its evolving role within wider gender-sensitive debates about human rights.

My methodology seeks to contribute to thinking about global/local and public/private linkages and the inner dynamics of peace building. I argue that the internal (private) developments within an organization such as AI may be integral to our understanding of the organization's external (public) activities related to gender issues. The local, in this sense, may relate to a specific organization and the global to the international campaign in which it is involved. Therefore, my essay interrogates a number of public and private, and theory and practice, divisions—the public of torture and the private of violence against women, the theory and practice of women's rights as human rights, the public division of NGO cam-

<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Mertus and Goldberg 1994; Peters and Wolper 1995, UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) 2002.

paigning on gender and the private of the NGO's internal processes of change regarding gender politics. I bring into relation a critical assessment of the AI report and interview material relating to AI itself in the context of long-standing feminist work on women's rights as human rights.

My arguments are divided into four sections. The first explores how the report links private pain to public peace. The state is the core focus in AI's report, and this demonstrates a strong continuity in terms of its traditions of campaigning. However, in line with feminist critiques stressing the political nature of private as well as public forms of violence against women, the report reconfigures state accountability into the expanded sphere of private as well as public domains. The second section further unpacks the concept of torture as the means by which AI relates private and public forms of violence. Since torture traditionally has been defined as occurring in public spaces (police stations, secret service cells, prisons, etc.), what does it mean to incorporate private forms of violence against women within the definition? The third section addresses the state's limited ability to function as an agent of its own change. Amnesty International makes the concept of "due diligence"—which places a burden on states to both actively protect individuals from abuses of their rights and fully address breaches of rights through legal process, "reparation," and "redress"—central to the report (AI 2001a, 7). Due diligence extends state accountability to the actions of private individuals who deprive a person of his or her human rights: "AI considers that acts of violence against women in the home or the community constitute torture for which the state is accountable when they are of the nature and severity envisaged by the concept of torture in international standards and the state has failed to fulfil its obligation to provide effective protection" (8).<sup>2</sup> The fourth section considers AI as a site of change in relation to gender politics and discusses the connections between localized institutional change and globalized political campaigning.

<sup>2</sup> "UN Convention against Torture, Article 1. 'For the purposes of this Convention, the term "torture" means any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted on a person for such purposes as obtaining from him or a third person information or a confession, punishing him for an act he or a third person has committed or is suspected of having committed, or intimidating or coercing him or a third person, or for any reason based on discrimination of any kind, when such pain or suffering is inflicted by or at the instigation of or with the consent or acquiescence of a public official or other person acting in an official capacity. It does not include pain or suffering arising only from, inherent in or incidental to lawful sanctions'" (AI 2001a, 4).

### Private pain and public peace

Violence against women falls into the realm of the private in a number of ways. It is private because it frequently takes place in the private sphere of intimate relations between men and women, husbands and wives, and in the physical locations of those relations, notably the home. Violence against women has sociospatial characteristics as well. Even when a man attacks a woman in a public space, the private patriarchal boundary around them may serve to keep others from interfering if he is perceived to be her intimate partner. The violence in such instances is regarded as a private matter, and much institutional change, including police action, has revolved around the recognition that violence against women is a public offense and one that should be dealt with and punished accordingly.

There are also sociospatial dimensions affecting women's exposure to violence in public: rape or other forms of attack, sexual harassment, or other forms of abuse by men in positions of power. Women's social identification with the private sphere puts them at risk from the exertion of male power, including its most violent manifestations, in public spaces. Feminists have therefore mapped the diverse forms of women's vulnerability to violence across public and private settings as intrinsic to an understanding of patriarchal oppression and gendered identities. The operation of male power across public and private spheres frames women as under the control (or protection) of men. The patriarchal state serves to entrench this situation.

Feminist ambivalence about the state runs deep. As Jan Jindy Pettman has explained, "There is a very complex politics here, as women's organisations and feminists direct demands at the state, for more services or protection, while many are profoundly suspicious of the state and its implication in the reproduction of unequal gender relations" (1996, 9). The state is at once representative of institutionalized inequalities between men and women and a powerful site of actual or potential change (see Pateman 1988; MacKinnon 1989). As the sole legitimate user of force to maintain internal and external order, the state also expresses patriarchal power as violence, for example, through masculinist cultures of militarism (Cohn 1999). Therefore, feminist interrogation of the state involves a critical assessment of patriarchy and force (Hoffman 2001). This approach links the private pain of women to questions of public peace. Affirming the theoretical and policy-oriented feminist debates about women's rights as human rights, the report articulates that wherever and however violence against women occurs, it is a matter of general (public) concern.

*Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* maintains AI's traditional orientation toward state accountability. In other words, it could be argued that AI



does not fundamentally diverge from its state-centered focus. Indeed, it reaffirms that focus while refashioning it, working from the public to the private and back to the public again to track state responsibility in a holistic fashion and to elaborate it in terms of private as well as public acts of torture against women.

Sometimes the perpetrators of acts of violence against women are agents of the state, such as police officers, prison guards or soldiers. Sometimes they are members of armed groups fighting against the government. However, much of the physical, mental and sexual abuse faced by women is at the hands of people they know, such as husbands, fathers, employers or neighbours.

States have a duty to ensure that no one is subjected to torture or ill-treatment, whether inflicted by agents of the state or by private individuals. Yet far from protecting women, states all around the world have allowed beatings, rape and other acts of torture to continue unchecked. When a state fails to take effective measures to protect women from torture, it shares responsibility for the suffering these women endure.<sup>4</sup>

The report attempts to raise the accountability threshold of states by going beyond the public boundaries of the official arms of the state, such as police and prison officers, or groups resistant to the state, to include private individuals: "AI applies a human rights framework to combat violence against women and insists that under international human rights law, states have a responsibility to protect women from violence, whether the acts are committed by state officials, at the instigation of state officials or by private individuals. . . . As part of its campaign for an end to torture, AI holds states accountable for all acts of torture of women, whatever the context in which they are committed and whoever is the perpetrator" (AI 2001a, 3; see also Bunch 1993; Peters and Wolper 1995).

Amnesty International is undergoing organizational change as it links its campaigning on torture to global campaigning on women and human rights. It holds firm to its established campaigning terrain in relation to torture—one historically focused on state (public) forms of torture—while also moving toward a more holistic (public/private) approach with regard to women. It therefore maintains its traditional campaigning ground while working for further change on the basis of that ground.

<sup>4</sup> Introduction to the report available at <http://www.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/print/ACT400012001>. Accessed November 26, 2001.

In this process, AI is considering past and present policy conditions, alongside strategies ultimately aimed at transforming those conditions. A cornerstone of AI's work in this regard is the UN Convention against Torture, on the basis of which states can be called to account for severe acts of cruelty by or on behalf of the state or acquiesced to by it. The report retains the central place of the convention but goes beyond it to cite international human rights law's identification of state "responsibility for human rights abuses committed by non-state actors" (AI 2001a, 6). The focus is on the permissive role of the state or "failure of state protection." The report goes on to note that "the [UN] Special Rapporteur on violence against women has held that . . . 'a State can be held complicit where it fails systematically to provide protection from private actors who deprive any person of his/her human rights'" (7). Amnesty International seeks to set the predominantly "public" interpretation of torture in the Convention against Torture within an extended private/public sociospatial definition that recognizes torture as "acts of violence against women in the home or the community" (8).

Statements within the report directly link the social (public) and individual (private) forms of "vulnerability" affecting women with the exacerbated impact for "poor and socially marginalized women" (AI 2001a, 10). Such stances have been central to feminist analyses of the structural disadvantages of women, which identify women's vulnerability as grounded in socioeconomic inequalities. As Michelle Fine and Lois Weis argue in the context of the United States at the turn of the twenty-first century:

We exit this century and enter another with violence against women smarting, bound to another form of violence. That is, State-sponsored violence by which the public sphere, the State-sponsored safety net (always frayed and inadequate), has rapidly been dismantled, first by right-wing Republicans and soon thereafter by "moderate" Democrats, as poor and working-class women and their children fall through the huge holes in the webbing. And yet today, with no public accountability, working-class and poor women (and men) have been tossed from our collective moral community, in particular by severe curtailments in their access to welfare, shelter and higher education. These very well traveled exit ramps from domestic abuse are under intensive and deliberate destruction. (Fine and Weis 2000, 1140–41)

By identifying "a twinning of State and domestic violence against women"

(1141), Fine and Weis emphasize the degree to which the overall social conditions confronting women in relation to violence and, importantly, the constraints on the possibilities for them escaping it are configured within a public/private dynamic that is evident in women's embodied experience of multiple "spaces of danger and threat" with "few exits" (1144). Fine and Weis posit "a restored feminist public sphere that recognizes the ravaged and intimate connections among the economy, public support for education, violence against women, and a restored welfare state" (1144). As an integrated approach to the public and private in the state, this resonates with Pettman's powerful analysis of "an international political economy of sex" (1996, 185–207). As Pettman very clearly states: "There is a close, though by no means fixed or uncontested, connection between social control of women and violence against them, and between these and the wider structures of gender/gendered power" (186). The vulnerability of women to violence is socially constructed across the public and private spheres and patriarchally performed, directly and indirectly, by agents and processes of the state and by private individuals. With the growth of migratory female workforces, notably in domestic service, diverse public and private settings come into play for the women involved, with multiple forms of vulnerability involving cross-cultural and racialized (including colonial and postcolonial) contexts (188–93).

Feminist perspectives disrupt the abstractions of local politics, international politics, and international political economy by, among other things, writing the body into them. They replace male-centered limitations of the hierarchical public-over-private interpretation of social reality with gendered explorations of the structures, processes, and identities that relate public and private, implicitly and explicitly. The gendered body is an intrusion into the disembodied world of mainstream masculinist theory, and this intrusion reveals the expressions or manifestations of gendered forms of power, including (sexualized and racialized) violence (Youngs 2000). Lived reality, rather than being framed within the assumed neatness of patriarchal "order," is negotiated on the basis of the conflicts (including those articulated brutally) that at least partly result from the unequal bases and implications of that "order."

In such terms, *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* can be understood as a gendered intervention in the debate on torture. It gives priority to the embodied experiences of women across public and private settings. Rather than working with the traditional abstractions of public from private, and vice versa, it focuses on the linkages between public and private that women's experiences of violence evidence. The report is another contribution to the growing international recognition of this dimension of

women's lives as key to the human rights cause. The report makes specific reference to the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women's definition of such violence "as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life.' It includes 'violence perpetrated or condoned by the State, wherever it occurs' and 'violence occurring in the family' and the 'general community'" (AI 2001a, 65).

As such statements make clear, the social and global contextualization of violence against women is central to "locating" it within the human rights framework. Amnesty International is a notable campaigning organization in this context because of its clearly delineated human rights focus, its independence from governments, and its grassroots orientation.<sup>5</sup>

### **Torture and violence against women: Making the links**

Amnesty International's reputation is for working to free prisoners of conscience, and political prisoners and states are the key targets in such work. Its campaigning on the torture and ill-treatment of women maintains that focus on the state while challenging the ways in which states (and the Convention against Torture) would generally identify torture as a "public" rather than a "private" form of mistreatment of women. Part of the politics of AI's campaign is the connections it makes between dominant framings of torture and wider human rights perspectives, including those focused specifically on women's rights. As Edna Aquino, campaign coordinator for women's rights at AI's International Secretariat explained to me: "In this report, AI tried to reconcile the UN Convention against Torture, which has yet to formally acknowledge gender-based violations against women as 'torture' and those advances being made, on the other hand, by other UN bodies that have acquired and applied a gender analysis in their monitoring and reporting of human rights violations against women" (Aquino 2001).

The report's social and global contextualization of violence against

<sup>5</sup> "AI is a voluntary, democratic, self-governing movement with more than a million members and supporters in more than 140 countries and territories. It is funded largely by its worldwide membership and by donations from the public. No funds are sought or accepted from governments for AI's work in documenting and campaigning against human rights violations." Introduction to the report available at <http://www.amnesty.org/ai.nsf/print/ACT400012001>. Accessed November 26, 2001.

women is a fundamental aspect of AI's detailed efforts to "reconcile" the tensions between the public and private framings of violence against women. The report challenges the separations and distinctions between these public and private framings and instead emphasizes continuities of violence against women across public/private boundaries. But, in so doing, AI treads a difficult line, which, for grounded campaign and policy reasons, involves the need to avoid any danger of undermining the Convention against Torture as it stands, with all its importance to the core of the organization's work.

We tried to integrate the definition of torture with the conceptual framework of "violence against women" and highlighted the pervasiveness of discrimination in many societies that underpins women's vulnerabilities to torture and ill-treatment. This report is groundbreaking for AI, especially when one considers its foundations on "classic" international law. . . . Human rights concepts on "torture" evolved from the classic legal principle that law operates solely in the public sphere and that the state is only accountable for acts of torture committed by its own agents. Acts against individuals that are of the same nature and effects as "torture" but which take place in the so-called private sphere and are committed by someone related or close to the victim would not necessarily have a place within the classic definition of "torture." (Aquino 2001)

*Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* begins by making the public-private connection through the association of three cases of violence against women: rape by soldiers, torture and rape by police officers, and a refugee woman who fled domestic violence only to be refused asylum in the United States:

A woman in a village in a war-torn European country, a young Kurdish woman in Turkish police custody, a battered mother of two from Central America seeking asylum in the USA. On the surface, little links these three women other than their gender and their suffering: they come from different countries and dissimilar communities, and the men who assaulted them have very different backgrounds. What connects these three cases is that all three women have been the victims of torture. All three women have had to contend not only with violent physical abuses, but also with official silence or indifference. In all three cases, the men who abused them committed their crimes with impunity. In all three cases, the state failed to take the basic steps needed to protect women from physical

and sexual abuse. The state therefore shares responsibility for the suffering these women have endured, whether the perpetrator was a soldier, a police officer or a violent husband" (AI 2001a, 1–2).

Working from case-based, practice- and policy-oriented perspectives, the report identifies links between individuals in different roles—soldiers, police officers, husbands, judges—and different public and private settings—war, prison, home, courtroom. And, importantly, the cases illustrate the national and international contexts of violence against women as well as the various boundaries within these contexts between public and private and between factions and states. Social and global contextualization of violence against women locates the problem firmly within the concerns of national and international law, bringing state accountability into play. This is pivotal for AI's campaigning concerns because it maintains the organization's established focus on the state. The diverse social manifestations of inequality between men and women, including different forms of violence against women, are part of "a global culture." Thus patriarchal abuse is a global problem cutting across public/private divides and state boundaries:

Torture of women is rooted in a global culture that denies women equal rights with men and that legitimizes the violent appropriation of women's bodies for individual gratification or political ends. . . . For all the gains that women around the world have made in asserting their rights, women worldwide still earn less than men, own less property than men, and have less access to education, employment and health care. Pervasive discrimination continues to deny women full political and economic equality with men. Violence against women feeds off this discrimination and serves to reinforce it. When women are abused in custody, when they are raped by armed forces as "spoils of war," when they are terrorized by violence in the home, unequal power relations between men and women are both manifested and enforced. Violence against women is compounded by discrimination on grounds of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, social status, class and age. Such *multiple discrimination* further restricts women's choices, increases their vulnerability to violence and makes it even harder for them to gain redress. (AI 2001a, 2; my emphasis)

As feminists have frequently stressed, the oppression of women is a systemic condition, and it comes in a range of individualized and institutionalized forms that affect women's life opportunities, or lack of them,

their physical freedoms, constraints, and identities. Overt acts of violence against women may be among the most extreme demonstrations of their oppression but cannot be fully understood outside the pervasive and multifaceted context in which these acts occur. The "relational" emphases of feminist approaches to the ontological realm are key here, particularly with regard to the kinds of critique and advocacy that have challenged the traditional limitations of human rights discourse. As V. Spike Peterson has argued:

The feminist critique of human rights practices reminds us that good intentions and liberal commitments are not in themselves sufficient. Although the liberal rights tradition (admirably) serves to minimize the incidence of direct violence, it stops short of challenging structural violence. In one sense, the relegation of women's rights is simply indicative of the "acceptance" more generally of structural violence within the reigning normative order. But in other—and, I believe, more significant—senses, the relegation of women's rights is directly entailed by the domination dynamic embedded in our world view and its moral philosophy. The feminist critique of theoretical foundations reveals a masculinist ontology—an understanding of human nature imposed by taking the standpoint of men (more specifically, elite, white men) as generic. (1990, 306)

Amnesty International's report on violence against women as torture can be directly related to such a feminist focus on ontological concerns. The critique of torture, explicit and implicit in the report, inherently criticizes the "androcentrism" (Peterson 1990, 306) of the traditional orientation toward torture within the dominant political and legalistic discourses. It also criticizes the "atomistic" (304) nature of the traditional public-over-private approach that is based on notions of the abstract (public, male) individual. The critique is productive in feminist terms because it links the interpretation of torture to the structural conditions of inequality, which provide the direct and indirect bases for violence against women: "The model of human nature currently presupposed is inadequate for eliminating structural violence (because that model presupposes domination), but it is also decisively inaccurate as a model of human nature. The world's majority (*all* who are 'marginalized') are excluded from this model; their experiences provide alternative models; and these alternatives must be acknowledged and drawn upon if we are to achieve global solidarity and a just world order" (Peterson 1990, 306).

Amnesty International's gendered application of torture offers an al-

ternative model that is relational in terms of men and women and that recognizes structural (institutionalized) forms of violence as well as individual acts of violence against women. But it is important to see AI's stance as campaigning driven and pragmatic and to realize that there are some tensions behind its adoption of the rather dualistic position described above. Amnesty International holds on to the Convention against Torture—which does not address all forms of violence against women as torture—as a key framework for the pursuit of human rights breaches related to torture. At the same time, AI's gendered framing of *torture* asserts the need for a transformed understanding of the term.

We see here the politics of practice. Amnesty International is working with the policy and legal imperatives and safeguards of the current system while at the same time campaigning for the system to be transformed into one that is better, more effective, and inclusive. The scenario is particularly interesting in that it highlights the contrasting circumstances for theoretical (philosophical)-based versus practice (policy)-based efforts toward change. Theoretical analysis can (and often needs to) posit the possibility of complete transformation—that is, the move from an abstract (male-centered) to a gendered approach to human rights. This places no constraints, practice oriented or otherwise, on the depth of critique or the transformative ideas associated with it. It allows for philosophical interrogation of what is masked or avoided by masculinist normative orders. Such theoretical groundwork is relevant to, but often distinct from, the kind of applied thinking necessary to strategic (legal, etc.) moves toward real, inclusive change.

### **The state as pivotal to change**

The imperatives of practice- and policy-based activity include as a working priority holding on to ground that has been won toward change and using effective tools that already exist (e.g., the Convention against Torture), while campaigning for further change that may ultimately have transformative impact. The present conditions and the future possibilities may be in tension, but this is a tension that must be worked with, actively and carefully, to safeguard the actual and likely benefits of both: "We remain mindful of the value of the Convention against Torture. It is still one of the most viable instruments we could use to monitor and pin down states' responsibilities in upholding international human rights standards, which their governments are supposed to adhere to. Despite being one of the most widely ratified UN conventions, however, torture continues to be rampant in most parts of the world and the Convention against Torture



is the most important internationally accepted standard against which states' international obligations would be measured" (Aquino 2001).

These are the benefits of the present conditions. They affirm the political and legal importance of linking the concept of torture directly to violence against women. Through this linkage, the public sphere of international law and the public sphere of states are linked to the public and private spheres of gendered realities. Hence a major focus of *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* is the violence and inequality that women experience across the private and public circumstances of their lives:

Our documentation of cases in this report illustrates the existence of a *continuum* between those acts of violence committed against women by state agents (when they come into contact with the law) and those committed by persons close to them in their homes or in their community. The *continuum* is about their common vulnerabilities—the risks, the type or the nature of human rights violations they face—in the hands of the state agent or members of their family or community and in the confines of their homes or in prisons or in the refugee camps, in armed conflict situations or in custody of the state. This *continuum* is maintained and reinforced by women's status in society and how society regards them as women. (Aquino 2001; my emphasis)

The notion of continuum takes on particular political significance in this context. Continuum is, in a sense, the dual site of present conditions and future possibilities. In order to stress the private as well as public nature of torture against women and thus the continuum of state accountability, the report focuses on the severity of harm and intentional infliction:

The severity of the harm inflicted upon women by private individuals can be as damaging as that inflicted on women who are tortured by agents of the state. The *long-term effects* of repeated battering in the home are physically and psychologically devastating. Women are traumatized and injured by rape, *wherever the crime takes place*. The medical consequences include psychological trauma, wounds, unwanted pregnancies, infertility and life-threatening diseases. Many abuses in the family or the community are intentionally inflicted. In addition, *such abuses are often inflicted for similar reasons to torture in custody*. Torture in custody is often used not only to extract confessions but also to instil profound dread into victims, to break their will, to punish them and to demonstrate the power of the

perpetrators. Similar purposes characterize acts of torture in the family or the community. The perpetrators may seek to intimidate women into obedience or to punish women for allegedly bringing shame on relatives by their disobedience. (AI 2001a, 5; my emphasis)

Such an assessment of torture and violence against women is an applied explanation of why public forms of violence against women cannot be regarded as distinct from private forms of violence against women, of why approaches that abstract the public from the private (politically and legally) are incomplete and distorted. *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* links structural factors (both public and private) established over time with more immediate and evident actions in the public and private spheres. As feminist critiques have emphasized, the structural conditions of women's lives operate across the historically established boundaries of public and private existence.

Amnesty International's assessment explores these connections in precise ways—by equating the degree of harm that can be caused by private individuals with that inflicted by agents of the state, linking the long-term effects of domestic violence with traditional interpretations of torture, and breaching the public/private divide in illustrating that wherever the abuse takes place, it remains abuse. The brutal aims of control and intimidation themselves cross the public/private divide in violence against women.

In terms of states' capacities to recognize and act on the public/private continuum of violence against women, there are also a number of important points relating to the concept of "due diligence" on which AI relies. The concept is applied in deeply structural ways, and this is logical in relation to the areas discussed above. *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* draws as much attention to the social circumstances, parameters, and constraints women confront as to the mechanisms, legal or otherwise, that may be available to address violence against women. State inaction, the report explains, involves such factors as "inadequate preventive measures; police indifference to abuses; failure to define abuses as criminal offences; gender bias in the court system; and legal procedures which hamper fair criminal prosecution" (AI 2001a, 7).

Problems such as police indifference and gender bias can clearly be addressed by legal and institutional change, but they can also be linked to wider social (structural) manifestations of gender discrimination. This is the case with the difficulties women may encounter in getting their plight recognized or addressed: "Many women victims of violence find access to legal redress and reparations difficult, if not impossible. Impunity and indifference habitually surround many acts of violence against

women" (AI 2001a, 7). Making violence against women visible as something that should be confronted and tackled is also part of the challenge of transcending the limitations of established definitions of torture.

Feminists, as I earlier indicated, have long struggled with the contradictions in the state's two roles of perpetuating patriarchal power as well as being a key site, in institutional and legal terms, for exposing and attacking it. In this sense, feminist activists have confronted similar problems to those outlined above relating to AI—working for change while at the same time drawing on the institutions (e.g., the state) and legal frameworks already in place. As Karen Engle has explained, "Regardless of the approaches they take, women's human rights advocates confront a difficult task in attempting to secure women's place in the international human rights framework. Explicitly or implicitly, they challenge traditional notions of human rights for failing to take women into account adequately. At the same time, though, they rely on international legal instruments and human rights law and language as vehicles for achieving women's equality. Thus, *a tension emerges*, an ambivalence about whether and how women's rights can become a part of human rights" (1992, 521; my emphasis).

Amnesty International and *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* are clearly working for change within the system, with the state pivotal in bringing about the transformation to a holistic (public and private) approach to torture. The report calls into question the limited (public) definition of torture and identifies states as accountable for the operation of an expanded (public and private) definition of torture and, importantly, action against it (AI 2001a, 3). The recommendations in the report are directed primarily at states and their governments, covering areas such as the condemnation of all acts of violence against women; the prohibition of acts of violence against women and the establishment of adequate legal protection against such acts; the investigation of all allegations of violence against women; prosecution, punishment, and reparation; protection against torture in custody; and prevention of torture of women in armed conflicts.

There is clearly tension in identifying the state as both part of the problem and the main guarantor of change in relation to women's rights as human rights. To what extent does the actual patriarchal nature of states work against such change or, equally importantly, even full recognition of the need for it? These are deep structural questions and not ones the AI report can open up in any major way. But they remain key questions for feminist critique of the state, patriarchy, and force, and the relationship among them. As John Hoffman has recently argued: "Not

only are all states sovereign (in their own eyes), but this sovereignty helps to explain why the force of the state permeates social relations as a whole. Male violence is not just analogous to the force of the state: it is part of the state, authorized by the state, and although some women may be attacked by men who are not themselves state functionaries, this violence is still state-related in character. Patriarchy is linked to force, which in turn is linked to the state" (2001, 109).

Critique of and debate about these areas remains high on feminist agendas, and *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* falls largely outside of such developments, though it has some relevance to them. It is useful to explore in this regard AI's own climate for change in relation to gender, to recognize such organizations as part of change themselves rather than solely as campaigners for change.

### **Gender and Amnesty International**

Amnesty International has an established international place at the forefront of NGO activity to combat torture. As such, its campaigning work interrogates state activity and its legitimacy. A major part of AI's profile is its orientation toward calling states to account for the detentions and acts of violence they commit, notably against prisoners of conscience and political prisoners. It has a strong reputation in the arena of work against torture as it has been traditionally defined.

How significant is it, therefore, that AI should be making specific contributions to the efforts to gain greater recognition of and action against violence against women? Indeed, how significant is it that it should be explicitly addressing the transformation of the abstract "public" definition of torture into a grounded public/private one? Aquino of AI described *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* as "groundbreaking" for the organization. The report signifies that in working for external change and a new understanding of torture that incorporates violence against women, AI is also, to some degree, undergoing change itself as an organization.

To put it simply, as AI works to contribute to the gendering of international human rights law, the organization itself is being gendered. And AI is undertaking this work from a specific campaigning location that has not been primarily gender oriented in the past. Could this be considered a strength in prioritizing the kinds of connections it has set out in the report between public and private forms of violence? In working from a specific, predominantly "public"-oriented site and moving into an overtly public/private one, does AI have a particular contribution to make?

Aspects of the analysis presented here have addressed such questions

in certain ways. They are not easy or appropriate to answer in any complete sense, but they do draw our attention to the diversity and contrasts in the nature of campaigning for women's rights and, to some extent, the wider implications of those contrasts. This includes change within NGOs themselves. Because of their functions within global processes, NGOs can be notable sites for investigating how transformational politics are becoming institutionalized. In this sense, I am interested in looking not just at what NGOs are doing or saying, but why and how they have come to do and say it, and what the meanings behind it may be.

The grassroots linkages to *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* are interesting in this context, too. To some degree, the report is a concrete representation of the activities and preoccupations of AI's global network and the growing importance of gender issues within it: "We have a network of committed professionals and volunteers at all levels of the organization who are the catalysts in bringing AI to challenge some dominant albeit gender-blind human rights concepts. We have a network of focal points for AI's work on women's rights in more than sixty countries. So many of the case examples in the report featured some groundbreaking issues (e.g., human rights violations against *dalit* women in India, honor killings in Pakistan, trafficked women to Israel) by colleagues who have applied gender-sensitive methodology in their research and reporting" (Aquino 2001).<sup>6</sup>

The interactions between the activities and concerns of activists on the ground and the institutional processes of AI as an NGO are part of the dynamics of change reflecting the global/local dimensions of gender politics. The networking and organizational processes behind *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* are as much a part of those politics as the final document itself and the processes to which it contributes: "The next phase of strengthening AI's work in this area will be through the creation of the Gender Unit which will be tasked to mainstream the gender analysis in the internal processes of the organization; and enhancing a gender-sensitive methodology in our research and action. Efforts will also be taken to help empower our women activists situated in all countries where we have a presence and to help them become more effective in their collective role as the 'public face' of AI on women's rights issues" (Aquino 2001).

<sup>6</sup> "Dalit literally means 'broken people', a term used to describe members of the Scheduled Castes, formerly known as 'untouchables'. Dalits are a disadvantaged social group, and violence against dalit women is common" (AI 2001a, 9)

### Private pain/public peace: Concluding thoughts

*Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* is just one intervention in the global campaign for recognition of women's rights, and as such its importance lies at least in part in its connections with wider debates and strategies. Amnesty International adopts a specific campaigning approach in the report consistent with its own traditions as a human rights organization. In considering the private as well as the public nature of torture and examining in some detail the joint impact of both forms, as well as the motivation driving them, AI is working with the legitimacy that instruments such as the Convention against Torture provide while critiquing the limitations of traditional dominant ("public") interpretations of torture.

Such a dual position involves two major moves. One retains the Convention against Torture's definition of *torture* as severe physical or mental pain or suffering. The other entails careful elaboration of why private forms of violence against women can be considered torture. The state and its enhanced accountability in relation to private as well as public forms of torture are central to the report. Thus AI affirms women's rights as human rights in terms of international law and campaigns for states to be fully accountable across public/private divides, which means ensuring "effective protection" against violence against women (AI 2001a, 5).

The report focuses on structural conditions of violence as well as on acts of violence. This is the case with its discussion of "due diligence" in relation to state accountability and the sociocultural and economic conditions of gender inequalities. The report is thus concerned with social and institutional processes and parameters: "The failure of the state to ensure women's enjoyment of social, economic and cultural rights further hinders their access to redress for acts of violence and facilitates continuing torture and ill-treatment" (AI 2001a, 39).

The report elaborates an alternative model of human nature, one that replaces the abstract (masculinist) atomistic individual of liberal legal traditions with gendered and unequal relational individuals. In this regard, it is a policy-oriented, practice-based assessment that has much in common with feminist perspectives. There are tensions, particularly with regard to the state, in the report as a whole. These signal the degree to which AI is working both within existing state and legal frameworks and advocating for some measure of change in the workings of those frameworks. The report clearly engages in a critique of the state while at the same time maintaining the state as the agent of its own change.

It is important to recognize the limitations of this critique in feminist terms. These would call to account the patriarchal limitations of states' capacities to both revision themselves through a gender lens (Peterson

1992) and act accordingly to effect change that would genuinely enforce women's rights as human rights. The arguments presented here, however, also stress that feminist activists face tensions similar to those confronted by AI in working for practical policy change and a similar imperative to use the existing means of change, however flawed they may be. Feminists might be working, in various forms of theory and practice, toward an entirely different kind of state, but we cannot wait for that to arrive before taking incremental steps to improve the lives of women in the meantime.

Radical feminist critiques of the state stress the need for new relational approaches to the individual, autonomy, and power, which are based on relations within and between genders rather than abstract individuals (see, e.g., Youngs 1999; Hoffman 2001). The duality of AI's position lies in its working within established circumstances and maintaining its ability to do so while also working toward change. This practice is distinct from theoretical endeavors, which are not so tied by the pragmatics of such imperatives but freer, importantly so, to think critically about existing situations and their transformations.

I began my research on *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* by concentrating on AI's "public" role as a campaigning organization. Questions relating to the gendering of AI itself were, if anything, on the edges of this picture. But as the research progressed it became clear that both areas were important and that the links between AI's external campaigning and its internal developments were worthy of close consideration. Indeed, AI's focus on women's rights is closely related to the organization's own internal links to global women's movements. Its activist communities are a vital resource for both policy developments in preparing a report such as *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* and for AI's capacity to evolve as an organization, with new structures to facilitate work in such areas.

My conclusions demonstrate that there are things to be learned about theory and practice from investigating *Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds*. They suggest that when put into practice theoretical concerns will have specific applications, often based on the strategic issues in play. They also suggest that assessing the specifics of practice can provide reflective resources for thinking through theory.

*Broken Bodies, Shattered Minds* makes direct contributions to a deeper political understanding of the reasons why addressing the private pain of violence against women is intrinsic to moves toward public peace on the basis of rights for all. It makes these contributions in the context of international law on torture and thus utilizes an identifiable and well-established terrain related to the Convention against Torture to put forward its case. This relies heavily on making effective connections

between public and private forms of violence against women, which the report engages in at length in general and in case-related terms. As another step in the global campaign for women's rights, the report has its place, and it is interesting to note that it is as much part of AI's own (private or internal) journey in this regard as it is a (public or external) campaigning strategy.

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## Recent Efforts by Feminists to Advance Peace: Some Reports

Since the International Women's Conference in Beijing several important steps have been taken to incorporate women and their concerns into deliberations and decisions about peace. Interestingly, these have taken place at the international level. Still, even though new policies are now in place and implementation has begun, there is much to be learned about the difficulties of carrying out policies, about their unintended consequences, and about unexplored assumptions. The reports that follow are from actors working in specific circumstances. Two describe the work of shaping policy. Two deal with implementation. The first field report details efforts to develop a peace agreement in the Congo begun before UN Security Council Resolution 1325 was passed. The second describes peacekeepers' efforts to apply the principles of 1325 to the establishment of an independent government in East Timor. Theory underpins the development of any policy. For instance, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working at the United Nations tend to assume that women's mere presence makes a peace process more conciliatory and more focused on rebuilding society than on allocating power. After policies are put into practice, however, it is important that theorists reconsider and, perhaps, revise their thinking both about what procedures yield what results and even whether or not their original assumptions were valid.

The 2002 creation of the International Criminal Court was a landmark event. Pam Speers tells the story of the internationally organized Women's Caucus for Gender Justice and its successful efforts to influence the creation of that court. Approval of UN Security Resolution 1325 in October 2000 was equally important. The passage of this resolution represented a remarkable convergence of efforts. Inside the United Nations the office of Angela King, special adviser on gender issues and advancement of women, and the Division for the Advancement of Women played roles; even the Lessons Learned Unit of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had a hand by supporting my study, "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Operations," which resulted in the

Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on gender balance and mainstreaming. The major organizational work, though, was done by UNIFEM (the United Nations Development Fund for Women) and by a collection of nongovernmental organizations. Felicity Hill, Mikele Aboitiz, and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya provide an account of the crucial but often invisible work of NGOs working at the international level. In her report on the peace process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Nadine Puechguirbal points out the gap that exists between the signing of a cease-fire and the beginning of formal peace negotiations, a period during which women seem to disappear from view and prewar sex roles and norms reemerge. The other report is from East Timor, where Sherrill Whittington served in the Gender Affairs Unit in the first peacekeeping mission to specify that its nation-building work would be in accord with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

Too often peace activists find themselves protesting wars already in progress or peace agreements already signed. The reports above describe efforts to institutionalize women's role in international peacemaking and building. Insuring presence is preemptive and almost certainly advantageous. Unfortunately, women have not yet developed the kind of strategic thinking about peace that men daily and at great expense devote to war. Since the nineteenth century no military strategist can ignore the principles laid down in Carl von Clausewitz's *On War*. Women need an equally encompassing sense of strategy as they pursue peace.

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## Women's Advocacy In the Creation of the International Criminal Court: Changing the Landscapes of Justice and Power

**O**n July 1, 2002, the treaty creating the world's first permanent international criminal tribunal to try individuals—any individuals, regardless of their official status or position—for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and, eventually, aggression entered into force. Known as the Rome Statute, the treaty forms the basis of the future International Criminal Court (ICC, or the Court), an institution intended to pierce the state-centric veil behind which errant state and nonstate actors have often been able to hide in the traditional human rights framework (Rome Statute 1998; see the app.).<sup>1</sup> It is significant that the ICC will be independent of existing institutions such as the United Nations and, more specifically, the UN Security Council (Rome Statute 1998, Preamble and Articles 2, 12, 13, and 16). This aspect alone has incurred the wrath of the defense and foreign policy establishment of the world's "sole remaining superpower," the United States, which is a telling indicator of the potential of the new institution as an independent mechanism of accountability.

Working together as the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice (Women's Caucus), women from different countries, regions, approaches, and disciplines merged energies and interests to help shape this unprecedented instrument as it was brought into being. Though the Women's Caucus

<sup>1</sup> Article 5 of the Rome Statute extends the Court's jurisdiction to genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and, eventually, aggression, once a definition of the crime is adopted and amended into the statute. Article 25 affirms the individual criminal responsibility of persons who commit crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court. Article 27 confirms that immunities will not bar the Court from exercising its jurisdiction over such persons without distinction based on official capacity (Rome Statute 1998). The treaty was adopted by 120 votes with twenty-one abstentions and seven "no" votes (China, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Qatar, the United States, and Yemen). On April 11, 2002, the Rome Statute received the sixty ratifications necessary for its entry into force on July 1, 2002, at which time the Court's jurisdiction became active.

is often lauded for the fact that the Rome Statute explicitly codifies for the first time many crimes of sexual and gender violence as war crimes and crimes against humanity, the caucus's advocacy was broader than the effort to include gender crimes and mechanisms for their effective prosecution; it went straight to the heart of the positioning of this Court in the world—its independence, its fairness, and its associations with peace.

The Court began functioning in the first half of 2003 with the inauguration of judges on March 11 and the selection of the chief prosecutor in April. The world is witnessing the strengthening of a system of international criminal justice at the same time as the rhetoric of terror is fueling a rapid rise in militarism and war making. Thus, the ICC will emerge in a climate where militarism and unilateralism are colliding with a convergence of efforts to mold and render enforceable the rule of a fair and just international criminal law—law long considered a matter of convenience, and entirely avoidable when inconvenient, by some of the world's most powerful forces.

This report will first explore the basic structure and function of the ICC and then will briefly discuss the efforts of the Women's Caucus to mainstream gender in the ICC. The third part of the report will present an overview of the nearly unprecedented level of gender mainstreaming in the Rome Statute and opportunities for using the statute as a standard locally. Finally, the report explores the potential of the ICC for fostering a culture of accountability in the current climate where a "war on terror" is being waged ostensibly in the name of security.

### **The International Criminal Court**

As mentioned above, the ICC is the world's first permanent international criminal tribunal set up to prosecute individuals for genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and, eventually, aggression. The ICC follows the establishment of various ad hoc international tribunals that were set up to address specific situations, such as the International Military Tribunals for the Far East and Nuremberg (IMT 1945; IMTFE 1946; see the app.) after World War II, and the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda in the early 1990s (ICTY 1993; ICTR 1994).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> There was serious discussion about the need for a permanent court with international criminal jurisdiction as early as the end of World War I, though there was no real progress until after World War II when the International Military Tribunals for Nuremberg and the Far East were established to prosecute war crimes and crimes against humanity committed

A crucial step to ensuring the Court's independence and impartiality was ensuring its independence of the UN Security Council. The United States led early efforts to assert Security Council control over the cases that could come before the Court (Scharf 1999). Had the Court been made dependent on the Security Council for the cases it could adjudicate, the permanent members of the Council wielding veto power would have been able to insulate their nationals from the Court's jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup> Instead, the role of the Security Council was greatly circumscribed in the final text of the Rome Statute. The Security Council is thus limited to referring cases to the Court, but this is not the only way that cases can come before the Court (Rome Statute 1998, Article 13). In addition to referrals by the Security Council, States Parties can refer cases to the Court, and, perhaps more significantly, the prosecutor, acting on her own initiative, can institute proceedings (Rome Statute 1998, Articles 12–15). Furthermore, the Security Council has the ability to defer cases for a period of twelve months by affirmative vote acting under Chapter VII of the UN Charter (Rome Statute 1998, Article 16).<sup>4</sup>

The Court's jurisdiction is complementary to national systems, as it will only be able to take a case when the national system is unwilling or unable to genuinely investigate and/or prosecute (Rome Statute 1998, Preamble and Articles 1 and 17). In addition to this complementarity mechanism, the Court's jurisdiction is also limited by several preconditions. Early in the negotiations, there was hope that the Court would be able to exercise universal jurisdiction, which would have allowed it to

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by Nazi forces and the Japanese Imperial Army, respectively (Bos 1999, 463). Indeed, there was such momentum toward a permanent court in the postwar scene that Article VI of the Genocide Convention (1948) anticipates a permanent tribunal to which cases could be referred. The subsequent onset of the cold war stalled serious consideration of the establishment of such a tribunal for the next fifty years. The idea of a permanent criminal court was finally brought fully to life again in the wake of the violence in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. In both of these cases, the Security Council moved to create ad hoc tribunals to address the brutal atrocities taking place. With the polarization of the cold war no longer an obstacle in the early 1990s, the international community could undertake serious efforts to establish a permanent court. Serious deliberations on the establishment of an international criminal court recommenced in 1995. See Bos 1999 and Lee 1999.

<sup>3</sup> The five permanent members of the UN Security Council are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additionally, ten elected members serve two-year terms (UN Charter 1945, Article 23[1]). The five permanent members must concur on all nonprocedural matters (UN Charter 1945, Article 27[3]).

<sup>4</sup> The deferral is renewable after twelve months by another affirmative vote of the Security Council.

prosecute the crimes no matter where they were committed or by whom.<sup>5</sup> However, as a result of intense opposition led by the United States, the preconditions of territoriality or nationality instead qualify the Court's jurisdiction.<sup>6</sup> The preconditions mean that either the territory where the crimes were committed must have been the territory of a State Party or the state of nationality of the person(s) suspected of committing the crimes must be a State Party (Rome Statute 1998, Article 12).<sup>7</sup> The preconditions, however, do not apply to the situations referred to the Court by the UN Security Council (Rome Statute 1998, Articles 12 and 13).

### **Women's caucus advocacy**

In 1995, nongovernmental organizations rallied around the United Nations' renewed efforts to create a permanent international criminal tribunal and formed an official coalition—the Coalition for an International Criminal Court (CICC; Pace and Thieroff 1999). The coalition consisted of human rights monitoring and advocacy groups, faith-based groups, victim/survivor advocacy groups, and others. In 1997, a substantial presence of women advocates and activists joined this effort and formed the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice in the International Criminal Court.<sup>8</sup> They began the work of mainstreaming gender in the creation

<sup>5</sup> The concept of "universal jurisdiction" holds that some crimes are so heinous that they harm the international community as a whole and that all states have a duty to investigate and prosecute them no matter where they are committed or who commits them; see Brownlie 1990, 307–9. The Geneva Conventions of 1949 applied this principle and provided that each state party "shall be under the obligation to search for persons alleged to have committed, or to have ordered to be committed, such grave breaches, and shall bring such persons, regardless of their nationality, before its own courts" (Geneva Convention I, Article 49; Geneva Convention II, Article 50; Geneva Convention III, Article 129; and Geneva Convention IV, Article 146). For discussions and advocacy positions relating to universal jurisdiction in the ICC, see Amnesty International 1997; Human Rights Watch 1998; and Women's Caucus 1998b.

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the U.S. opposition to universal jurisdiction, see Benedetti and Washburn 1999.

<sup>7</sup> Under this scheme, nationals of countries that have not ratified the Rome Statute could still be hauled before the Court if they are suspected of having committed crimes on the territory of States Parties—one of the most problematic features of the ICC from the perspective of U.S. policy makers.

<sup>8</sup> After the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998, the Women's Caucus became known as the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice.

of the new institution.<sup>9</sup> The effort built on women's human rights organizing in other arenas such as the Vienna Convention on Human Rights in 1993 where women came together to infuse the discussions with a gender perspective and advance the recognition of women's rights as human rights.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that the Women's Caucus was formed in the ICC negotiations at a critical moment in the history of the international women's human rights movement and was thus able to draw on the movement's momentum, as it had gathered strength through the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, and strategic objectives that had been formulated to that point (Nainar and Spees 2000, 6–7). At the same time, feminist advocates and legal experts had been monitoring the work of the Yugoslav and Rwandan tribunals that had been established by the UN Security Council in 1993 and 1994, respectively (Copelon 2000; Nainar and Spees 2000). This advocacy and the practice and jurisprudence of the two tribunals also informed the work of the Women's Caucus in the ICC process. The Women's Caucus for Gender Justice quickly expanded to include a regionally diverse pool of advocates and experts with experience advocating in national systems as well as in international forums. These caucus members attended the ICC negotiations as part of the Women's Caucus delegations and helped develop advocacy positions and strategies (Facio 1998). By the time of the Rome Diplomatic Conference in July 1998, the caucus had also developed an expansive network of organizations and individuals who supported the "core principles" of the Women's Caucus and who helped advocate for Women's Caucus concerns in capitals around the world (Facio 1998).

In the ICC negotiations, the Women's Caucus worked to reveal and

<sup>9</sup> "Gender mainstreaming" is a concept used in UN parlance and increasingly in national and regional forums. The United Nations Economic and Social Council has defined gender mainstreaming as "the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality" (ECOSOC 1997, see the app.). The term *gender* as used in the ICC context is discussed below.

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of the objectives and methodology of the Women's Caucus, see Facio 1998 and Women's Caucus 1998a. For a discussion of opposition encountered by the Women's Caucus from the Vatican and other conservative states, see Facio 1998; Bedont and Hall-Martinez 1999; Copelon 2000; Nainar and Spees 2000; Rothschild 2000.



correct the deficiencies in existing humanitarian law with respect to crimes of sexual and gender violence. Furthermore, the Women's Caucus was among the strongest voices calling for a more active role for victims and witnesses in the justice process, a broad reparations scheme, strong mandates for protection of victims and witnesses, and gender experts and women on the court and among staff at all levels (Facio 1998; Women's Caucus 1998b; Nainar and Speer 2000). This was in addition to the work concerning issues of jurisdiction and independence of the Court.

The work to mainstream gender continued after the Rome Statute. The statute called for the development of an Elements of Crimes Annex, further defining the crimes within the Court's jurisdiction, and a set of Rules of Procedure and Evidence, which were to be completed by June 30, 2000 (Resolution F 1998; Rome Statute 1998, Articles 9 and 51). Over the course of five preparatory commission meetings beginning in February 1999, the Women's Caucus worked to ensure that the achievements made in Rome were not undermined in the subsequent negotiations and to ensure progressive definitions of the crimes and rules relating to evidence in cases of sexual violence.

### **Mapping a gender perspective in the Rome Statute: Crimes of sexual and gender violence**

There has been much writing on the pervasiveness of sexual violence in armed conflict, both as a strategy of war and as a by-product of militarized aggression.<sup>11</sup> Feminist scholars and legal experts have pointed out both the deficiencies in international humanitarian law with regard to sexual violence and the lack of enforcement of those provisions that did exist, all of which contributed to the culture of impunity for sexual and gender-based violence.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> See, e.g., Brownmiller 1975; Khushalani 1982; Copelon 1994, and Dolgopel 1998.

<sup>12</sup> Khushalani 1982; Gardam 1992; Meron 1993, Copelon 1994; Askin 1997; Sellers 2000. The recent judgment of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military and Sexual Slavery, rendered in December 2001 in The Hague, illustrates one of the clearest examples of the ways in which the international community has ignored these crimes even in the face of egregious and widespread violence against women in armed conflict. More than fifty years after the end of World War II, prosecutors from nine different countries colonized or occupied by Japan during the war presented evidence of the Japanese Imperial Army's system of sexual enslavement, also known as the "comfort women" system, into which more than two hundred thousand women from throughout Asia were forced. The prosecutors before this "people's tribunal" opted to apply the law as it stood at the time that the post-World War II International Military Tribunals for Nuremberg and the Far East

A brief overview of two provisions related to sexual violence in prior humanitarian law is revealing of this problematic treatment. In the regulations attached to The Hague Convention of 1907, Article 46, which mandated respect for "family honour and rights," was commonly understood to encompass rape.<sup>13</sup> In the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, Article 27 states that "women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution, or any other form of indecent assault" (Geneva Convention [IV] 1949).<sup>14</sup>

While the Geneva Conventions became at least a bit more explicit in the provisions relating to sexual violence, especially as compared to the 1907 Hague Convention, they fell short of confirming rape and other sexual violence as grave breaches. The language of Article 27 merely calls for militaries to protect "women" (not men or children) from rape, enforced prostitution, and other forms of indecent assault but does not mandate punitive sanctions or enforcement mechanisms. Thus, the treatment of these crimes in Article 27 and their absence from the lists of grave breaches meant they would not easily give rise to universal jurisdiction, that is, the duty of all states to investigate and prosecute crimes no matter where they are committed or by whom.<sup>15</sup>

A critical aspect of the advocacy in the ICC negotiations was to ensure that the Rome Statute moved beyond such limited treatment and affirmed the gravity of forms of violence that are committed predominately, though not exclusively, against women. As a result, rape, sexual slavery, enforced prostitution, forced pregnancy, enforced sterilization, and sexual violence are included as war crimes and crimes against humanity (Rome Statute

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were in operation to underscore the idea that rape and sexual enslavement could have been prosecuted had the will to do so existed at the time (Judgment of the Women's International War Crimes Tribunal 2001).

<sup>13</sup> Hague 1907, Article 46. The Hague Convention essentially erased an explicit reference to rape in the Lieber Code, which served as a starting point for the drafting of The Hague Convention. The Lieber Code governed the conduct of the Union Army during the U.S. Civil War and prohibited rape under penalty of death (Lieber Code 1863, Article 44).

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted here that women's groups were instrumental in the formulation of the language of this provision in the Fourth Geneva Convention. The record of the negotiations around Article 27 reveals that the International Council of Women and the International Abolitionist Federation sought to expand the previous language and make it more explicit. They suggested the language as alternative text through a representative of the International Committee of the Red Cross (Final Record of the Diplomatic Conference of Geneva 1949).

<sup>15</sup> The jurisprudence of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has contributed significantly to the understanding of crimes of sexual and gender violence as grave war crimes and crimes against humanity in existing humanitarian law. See Askin 1999.

1998, Articles 8[2][b][xxii], 8[2][c][vi], and 7[1][g]). Additionally, trafficking and gender-based persecution are included as crimes against humanity (Rome Statute 1998, Articles 7[1][c], 7[2][c], and 7[1][h]). It is important that these crimes are now delinked from notions of honor or dignity, which will help to place the victims of such crimes at the center of concern rather than on the periphery of family or community, which carries old connotations of women as property. These crimes have also been affirmed as among the gravest (Rome Statute 1998).<sup>16</sup>

After the adoption of the Rome Statute, negotiations of the elements of the crimes began in order to provide more specificity as to the criminal conduct (Elements of Crimes 2002). In these post-Rome negotiations, the Women's Caucus advocated for progressive definitions of the crimes of sexual and gender violence. In the negotiations on the crime of rape, for example, the efforts were to ensure, first, that the elements maintained a focus on the crimes of the perpetrator, and not the victim; second, that the force element was defined broadly enough to encompass the non-physical coercive circumstances that often play on victims, especially in armed conflict but also to a certain extent in peacetime; third, that the definition would avoid unwieldy and harassing specificity; and finally, that the definitions would be gender neutral.<sup>17</sup> The definition of rape that resulted is as follows:

1. The perpetrator invaded the body of a person by conduct resulting in penetration, however slight, of any part of the body of the victim or of the perpetrator with a sexual organ, or of the anal or genital opening of the victim with any object or any other part of the body;
2. The invasion was committed by force, or by threat of force or coercion, such as that caused by fear of violence, duress, detention,

<sup>16</sup> Article 8(2)(b)(xxii) of the Rome Statute links the crimes of sexual and gender violence occurring in international armed conflict to "grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions"; Article 8(2)(c)(vi) links them to the serious violations contained in "Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions," which apply to internal armed conflict.

<sup>17</sup> The Women's Caucus began by advocating that the ICC negotiators follow the trends of the ad hoc tribunals, specifically the ICTR, which identified rape as "a physical invasion of a sexual nature under circumstances which are coercive" (see Women's Caucus 1999–2000, see also Prosecutor v. Jean-Paul Akayesu, Case No. ICTR-96-4-T at para. 596–98). The jurisprudence of the ICTY and ICTR has been instrumental in helping to reconceptualize the definition of rape for purposes of international criminal law as well as its conceptualization as a form of torture. See also Prosecutor v. Delalic et al., Case No. IT-96-21-A, Prosecutor v. Furundzija, Case No. IT-95-17/1-T; and Prosecutor v. Kunarac et al., Case No. IT-96-23-T and IT-96-23/1-T.

psychological oppression, or abuse of power, against such person or another person, or by taking advantage of a coercive environment, or the invasion was committed against a person incapable of giving genuine consent (Elements of Crimes 2002, Article 7[1][g]-1).

While the efforts to avoid unwieldy specificity were obviously unsuccessful, the definition does maintain a focus on the acts of the perpetrator and not on the victim; that is, a victim's lack of consent is not part of the elements, but, rather, the perpetrator's violation of a victim's physical and sexual autonomy is emphasized. Furthermore, the force element is defined broadly to encompass a range of coercive circumstances and is not restricted to physical force or threat of death.

Parallel to the negotiations on the definitions of the crimes were the negotiations on the Rules of Procedure and Evidence (RPE; Rules of Procedure and Evidence 2002). These negotiations presented an opportunity to avoid the very real danger that the treaty, its supplemental texts, and future Court might replicate many of the evidentiary problems that women have been working to correct in national-level judicial systems the world over regarding the trial of sexual and gender violence crimes.<sup>18</sup> Ultimately, these negotiations yielded rules of evidence in cases of sexual violence that prohibit a defense of consent and the submission of sexual conduct evidence except in very rare circumstances (RPE 2000, Rules 70 and 71). They require that any effort to submit such evidence be conducted in closed proceedings and be shown to be highly relevant and credible (RPE 2000, Rule 72). Additionally, the Court may not require that a victim's testimony be corroborated (RPE 2000, Rule 63).

<sup>18</sup> This tendency was avoided, at least in the formulation of procedural rules, when the ad hoc tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was established as a result of the advocacy of nongovernmental organizations and feminist legal experts. See Green et al. 1994 and Helsinki Watch 1995. The ICTY adopted rules of procedure that precluded traditionally discriminatory evidentiary practices such as inquiries into a victim's prior sexual conduct, requirements of corroboratory evidence, and problematic issues of consent that place the focus of the inquiry on the conduct of the victim and not on the perpetrator. The rule was replicated in the rules of procedure for the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. See ICTY Rules 2002, Rule 96, ICTR Rules 2002, Rule 96. The existence of this rule, however, did not in itself prevent harassment of witnesses and similar abuses during the course of trial. See *Prosecutor v. Delalic*, Decision on the Prosecution's Motion for the Redaction of the Public Record, ICTY Trial Chamber (June 5, 1997), Case No. IT-96-21, para. 47-50 (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia); Women's Caucus for Gender Justice 1999.

### **Victims and witnesses**

The Rome Statute contains broad mandates concerning the participation and protection of victims and witnesses. Article 68 is the centerpiece of the statute's mandates and provides that victims and witnesses can participate in the proceedings of the Court at appropriate stages (Rome Statute 1998, Article 68[3]). They may be assisted by a legal representative throughout the proceedings (Rome Statute 1998, Article 68[3]). Additionally, Article 68 requires that the Court take measures to protect the "safety, physical and psychological well-being, dignity and privacy of victims and witnesses" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 68[1]). In the process, the Court must also take into account "all relevant factors" including age, gender, health, and the nature of the crime, "in particular . . . where the crime involves sexual or gender violence or violence against children" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 68[1]). The Court may also conduct portions of proceedings in camera, in particular in cases of sexual violence or when the witness is a child. Additionally, evidence may be given via electronic "or other special means" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 69).

The statute also requires the creation of the Victims and Witnesses Unit, to be housed in the Registry of the Court. This unit will be tasked with providing protective measures, security arrangements, counseling, and other assistance and must include staff with "expertise in trauma, including trauma related to crimes of sexual violence" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 43[6]).

The Court will also have the authority to award reparations. Article 75 mandates that the Court develop principles relating to reparations, which include compensation, restitution, and rehabilitation (Rome Statute 1998, Article 75[1]). In some cases, the Court will be able to make awards of reparations against a convicted person (Rome Statute 1998, Article 75[2]). Article 79 of the Rome Statute also requires that the Assembly of States Parties establish a trust fund for the benefit of victims or their survivors (Rome Statute 1998, Article 79).

### **Women and gender expertise on the court**

The Rome Statute contains explicit mandates intended to ensure a presence of women on the Court as well as gender experts and experts on violence against women. Article 36(8) stipulates that in the nomination and election of judges, States Parties must take into account the need for "a fair representation of female and male judges" and the need for "legal expertise on specific issues, including, but not limited to, violence against

women or children" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 36[8][a] and [b]). This provision was put to the test in February 2003 when the election of the Court's eighteen judges took place. In a historic and unprecedented development, the elections resulted in a regionally diverse bench that included seven women (Women's Caucus 2003).<sup>19</sup> The presence of seven women on an eighteen-member panel of judges represents a significant advance in light of the traditionally low number of women serving as judges in international judicial institutions.<sup>20</sup>

The criteria relating to fair representation and expertise are also to be applied in the employment of staff for the Office of the Prosecutor and the Registry (Rome Statute 1998, Article 44[2]). Article 42(9) requires the prosecutor to appoint advisors with legal expertise on "sexual and gender violence" as well as other specific issues (Rome Statute 1998, Article 44[2]).

### **The gender definition**

The Rome Statute contains a definition of *gender*—the first in a legally binding international treaty. It is particularly significant that the term was included and a definition agreed on in a treaty that gives rise to individual criminal responsibility and that includes crimes such as gender-based persecution. This is striking when one considers that delegates at the Fourth World Conference on Women were unable to adopt a definition of *gender* for purposes of the Beijing Platform for Action, a nonbinding, unenforceable document.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> The female judges are Maureen Harding Clark (Ireland); Fatoumata Diarra (Mali); Akua Kuenyehia (Ghana); Elizabeth Odio Benito (Costa Rica); Navanethem Pillay (South Africa); Sylvia Steiner (Brazil), and Anita Usacka (Latvia). See also Specs 2002.

<sup>20</sup> Only one woman has ever served on the fifteen-member International Court of Justice. One woman is currently serving as a judge on the sixteen-member panel of permanent judges at the ICTY, and three of the sixteen permanent judges at the ICTR are women. Currently, no woman is serving on the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (Lunhan 2001). For a discussion of the rules adopted by the ICC Assembly of States Parties to govern the election process, see Specs 2002.

<sup>21</sup> See Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women 1995. Annex IV of the report simply affirms that *gender* is to be understood according to its commonly understood and generally accepted usage. In a 1996 report on the implementation of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the UN Secretary-General elaborated on what the commonly understood meaning of the term is: "Gender refers to the socially constructed roles played by women and men that are ascribed to them on the basis of their sex. . . . These roles are usually specific to a given area and time, that is, since gender roles are contingent on the

For the purposes of the Rome Statute, *gender* is defined as "the two sexes, male and female, within the context of society" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 7[3]).<sup>22</sup> This definition resulted from one of the most difficult debates at the Rome Conference. Delegates from Roman Catholic countries aligned with a group of Arab delegations to challenge the use of the term in the draft statute (Steains 1999, 371–75; Copelon 2000; Rothschild 2000). Their stated concern was that the definition would be read to encompass sexual orientation. These delegates sought to restrict the concept to biological sex difference and prohibit recognition of the social construction of gender. At one point, a group of delegates sought to substitute the term *sex* for *gender* as one means of preventing the recognition of social construction.

Fortunately, they were not successful. Delegates in favor of maintaining the term *gender* and a definition "capable of being interpreted to include the socially constructed roles" (Steains 1999, 373) won in the long run by the inclusion of the language "within the context of society" (Steains 1999, 374). The statutory definition thus enables the Court to include persecution based on sexual orientation and gender. Persecution on the basis of sexual orientation or differing gender identities could be viewed as targeting a group or collectivity by virtue of its nonadherence to norms or expectations of gender roles in a given societal context. Perhaps the most extensive known historical example of persecution on the basis of sexual orientation is that which was carried out by the Nazis during the Holocaust (Plant 1987; Grau and Shoppman 1997), but more recent examples exist as well (International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 1998; Amnesty International 2001; Human Rights Watch 2002). Since the crime of persecution involves the "severe deprivation of fundamental human rights" (Rome Statute 1998, Article 7[2][g]) in connection with any other crime against humanity or war crime listed in the statute by reason of the identity of the group or collectivity, it would be

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social and economic context, they can vary according to the specific context and can change over time. In terms of the use of language, the word 'sex' is used to refer to physical and biological characteristics of women and men, while gender is used to refer to the explanations for observed differences between women and men based on socially assigned roles" (Report of Secretary-General 1996).

<sup>22</sup> The Women's Caucus advocated for an understanding of gender that would encompass "socially constructed differences between men and women and the unequal power relationships that result" and affirmed that "differences between men and women are not essential or inevitable products of biological sex difference" (Women's Caucus 1998a).

difficult for a court to hold that such an egregious crime is permissible under international law.<sup>23</sup>

### Local Implementation

The complementarity scheme of the Rome Statute that allows the Court to exercise jurisdiction only when national systems are unable or unwilling to genuinely investigate or prosecute the crimes serves as an impetus for countries to ensure that their domestic legal systems are in conformity with the Rome Statute. Unless domestic criminal laws and procedures that allow for the trial of the types of crimes in the ICC's jurisdiction are in place, states would fail the complementarity test on the grounds of inability to prosecute and could be subject to the ICC's assertion of jurisdiction (Rome Statute 1998, Article 17). In many places, the crimes included in the Rome Statute have not been included in domestic criminal codes. This is especially so for some of the crimes of sexual and gender violence, particularly sexual slavery, forced pregnancy, and gender-based persecution.

Furthermore, the definitions of the crimes of sexual and gender violence in the Elements Annex and Rules of Procedure and Evidence are, in many cases, more progressive than their counterparts at the national level. For example, the definition of rape avoids problematic elements commonly found in national systems such as the lack of gender neutrality; requirements of overt, physical resistance on the part of the victim; and inquiries into the prior sexual conduct of the victim. In addition, many jurisdictions require corroboration of a victim's allegations, such as certification by a medical doctor that a rape took place or eyewitness accounts, before law enforcement officials accept charges.

<sup>23</sup> Increasingly, there is recognition at the international level that violence and persecution targeting persons of differing sexual and gender identities is impermissible under international legal standards. See *Thomas v. Australia* 1992, HIV/AIDS Guidelines 1998; letter from OHCHR 2001; see the app. Indeed, one conservative opponent of the Court has already acknowledged—and decried—the potential of the Court to address persecution on the basis of sexual orientation. Law professor Richard Wilkins makes a connection between the subject-matter jurisdiction of the Rome Statute and the International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS issued by the Joint UN Program on HIV/AIDS and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; see the app. The guidelines call for, inter alia, the repeal of laws criminalizing sexual acts between consenting adults and the creation of legal penalties for those who vilify “homosexual behavior.” Wilkins states: “It is hardly far-fetched to assume that the broad language of Article 7 of the ICC Statute—which among other things, criminalizes ‘severe [sic] deprivation’ of a group’s ‘fundamental rights’—could be used to achieve the goals set out by [the High Commissioner for Human Rights]” (2002).



In countries that ratify the Rome Statute, the gender provisions could help strengthen the capacity to address violence against women at the national level via the inclusion of additional crimes of sexual and gender violence, progressive definitions of existing crimes, and more gender-sensitive procedures for the trial of these crimes. Moreover, the existence of the crime of gender-based persecution in national systems could have favorable implications for asylum policies and regulations for women fleeing various types of gender-based violence and those endangered as a result of their sexual orientation or gender identity. With respect to crimes such as trafficking, the existence of an international tribunal with criminal jurisdiction can boost efforts to investigate the networks of traffickers and get at the various actors along the way. Furthermore, it is possible that the statute's concern for the protection of victims and witnesses can be used creatively as a standard for ensuring the noncriminalization of trafficked persons and a broader attention to complicated transnational and cross-border issues that often surround situations of trafficking.

More thinking needs to be done along these lines for women's groups to take full advantage of the Rome Statute at the national level and fold the gender gains into national systems in ways that make sense locally. It is thus imperative that women's groups focusing on issues of law reform and violence against women get engaged and help guide the domestic implementation process of this international treaty.

### **A building block toward human security?**

Contrary to many misconceptions, the International Criminal Court will not be only a war crimes tribunal, though the Rome Statute does codify and expand on traditional prohibitions in humanitarian law. The ICC will also be a court for the trial of violators of a developing international criminal law that encompasses violations of the laws of war in addition to genocide and crimes against humanity, which can be committed in times of war as well as in times of so-called peace.

Many nongovernmental organizations actively monitoring the negotiations expected that the Court would be a mechanism that would aid, indeed help revive, the UN mission to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" (UN Charter 1948, Preamble) rather than legitimizing war as an institution as long as there is compliance with the rules of the game. The extent to which the ICC will be able to withstand the pressure to become a legitimizing agent for the use of armed force as an instrument of foreign policy remains to be seen. Much of this will depend

on how the negotiations toward a definition of the crime of aggression play out.

Because the debates around the crime of aggression were so difficult, the Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of the ICC feared that the debate would seriously prolong the negotiations toward the Rome Statute (Von Hebel and Robinson 1999, 79). As a result, they chose to leave it out of the Court's jurisdiction until a definition could be adopted and amended into the statute at a later date (Von Hebel and Robinson 1999, 81–85). After the adoption of the Rome Statute in 1998, a working group was convened to undertake negotiations toward a definition (Resolution F 1998). Among the most sensitive issues at stake in the aggression negotiations are whether the UN Security Council is the sole arbiter in the international community in determining acts of aggression, what the level of force is that would constitute an act of aggression, and how individual criminal responsibility for the crime of aggression would be fixed (Proceedings of Prepcom 2001). As of this writing, the Working Group has labored over the course of eight sessions of the Preparatory Commission and has yet to reach consensus on any of the issues outlined above.

### **Accountability woes of a lone superpower**

While the ICC will by no means be a cure-all, its existence as an institution independent of traditional power plays should have an enormous bearing on the shape of global politics in the future. Indeed, there is reason to believe that it is already having an impact. The International Criminal Court has become a prominent feature of foreign policy in the world. The U.S. foreign policy on the ICC carries an array of disincentives designed to entice less powerful countries away from the Court, while European Union policy carries various incentives for ICC ratification.

The United States has been by far the Court's most hostile opponent.<sup>24</sup> On May 6, 2002, President George W. Bush effectively removed his predecessor's signature of the Rome Statute when he sent a letter to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan confirming that the United States would not ratify the treaty and therefore had no obligations arising from signature

<sup>24</sup> For a full discussion of the U.S. position and policy regarding the ICC, see International Federation of Human Rights 2002 and Speer 2003.

(Spees 2003, 123).<sup>26</sup> Bush's nearly unprecedented nullification of the treaty cleared the way for all-out U.S. opposition and a string of tactics aimed at undermining the future Court. Also in 2002, the U.S. State and Defense Departments embarked on a formal campaign in capitals around the world insisting on bilateral agreements prohibiting the extradition of U.S. nationals to the future Court (Spees 2003, 123–25). The United States has also sought, and obtained, similar language in Security Council resolutions relating to peacekeeping missions.

Shortly after Bush's official nullification of the signing, he signed into law legislation known as the American Servicemembers Protection Act (ASPA; see app.). The act prohibits all assistance to and cooperation with the future Court, authorizes the use of "any means necessary" to free U.S. nationals or allies held on behalf of the Court, and prohibits peacekeeping and other assistance to countries that support the Court (ASPA 2002). Because the Court will be officially seated in The Hague, the Netherlands, opponents of the law have dubbed it "The Hague Invasion Act," though any country holding a U.S. national or ally for the Court could be targeted by the commander-in-chief under this law. United States Senator Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who initiated the legislation, declared shortly after the adoption of the Rome Statute: "The ICC is indeed a monster—and it is our responsibility to slay it before it grows to devour us" (Helms 1998).

### Conclusion

The ICC will be a critical component of an international framework of accountability aimed at closing the political, practical, and jurisdictional gaps that have long fostered a culture of impunity. It is to be hoped that the Rome Statute will have the more positive effect of ensuring adherence to international law among civilian and military officials and encouraging the pursuit of justice, rather than war, as a response to future acts of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

Had an international criminal court been established after World War II as originally intended, it would be a much different court from the one we will see very soon. It would likely have reflected the postwar world order that led to the Allied Powers' control of the UN Security Council and thus would have been susceptible to becoming a mechanism of se-

<sup>26</sup> In treaty law signature indicates an intention to ratify and carries the obligation to refrain from actions that would defeat the object or purpose of the treaty. See Vienna Convention 1969, Article 18.

lective justice rather than an independent and impartial judicial institution that affirms the principles of equality before the law—criticisms that have been leveled at the World War II tribunals and the ad hoc tribunals established in the 1990s. Furthermore, it would not have had the advantage of lessons learned through the often tumultuous process of decolonization and the myriad legal, political, and economic issues that would emerge over the next fifty years of international legal development. And, most certainly, women would not have been able to influence the creation of the Court to the extent possible at the end of the twentieth century by drawing on the wealth of transnational feminist thinking, writing, strategizing, and organizing that has grown almost exponentially in the intervening five decades.

Even so, despite the major role played by women's groups in the ICC negotiations, the predominant voices in the ongoing debates and news items about the Court are men. Occasionally in mainstream circles mention is made of the inclusion of rape and other crimes of sexual and gender violence, but the dominant discourse about the Court paints a picture of a remote, elite institution associated with the laws of war that will try and punish individuals who break the rules of war. As ever, the conjured images of those taking part in this new justice system, as defendants, prosecutors, and judges, are men.

These images, however, stand in stark contrast to the reality of the provisions of the Rome Statute and the underlying advocacy of civil society generally and women in particular. Feminist critiques and theories of justice and power underlay the Women's Caucus's advocacy for broader conceptualizations of justice, a more empowered role for victims, mandates relating to the placement of women and gender experts throughout all organs of the Court, and, not least, the insistence on the independence of the Court from traditional power structures. Still, it has yet to fully dawn on many in the international community that this Court will not be business as usual. Women have been and will continue to be a part of it and, in doing so, have altered its trajectory.

## Appendix

### Treaties, Cases, Legislation, and International Documents

American Servicemembers Protection Act of 2002, Public Law 107-206, 22 USCA 7421 et seq.

*Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East*, January 19, 1946 (General Orders No. 1), Tokyo, as amended; General Orders No. 20, April 26, 1946, T.I.A.S. No. 1589.

*Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Trial of the Major War Criminals* (IMT), appended to the Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of Major War Criminals of the European Axis, August 8, 1945, London, 85 U.N.T.S. 251, 59 Stat./1544, as amended, Protocol to Agreement and Charter, October, 1945.

*Charter of the United Nations*, June 26, 1945, 59 Stat. 1031, T.S. No. 993, 3 Bevans 1153.

*Convention on the Regulation of the Laws and Customs of War on Land*, The Hague, October 18, 1907, 35 Stat. 2277, 1 Bevans 631 (The Hague Convention).

*Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*, approved and opened for signature, ratification, and accession by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 260 (III), December 9, 1948. Entered into force January 12, 1951, in accordance with Article 12.

Economic and Social Council, *Agreed Conclusions*, U.N. Doc. E/1997/2 (1997).

Elements of Crimes. *Official Records of the First Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court*, September 3–10, 2002, Doc. ICC/ASP/1/3 at 108; available on-line at [http://www.icc-cpi.int/docs/basicdocs/asp\\_records\(e\).pdf](http://www.icc-cpi.int/docs/basicdocs/asp_records(e).pdf).

*Fourth World Conference on Women: Declaration and Platform for Action*, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.177/20 (September 15, 1995).

*Geneva Convention (I) for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces in the Field*, September 15, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 31.

*Geneva Convention (II) for the Amelioration of the Condition of Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea*, August 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 85.

*Geneva Convention (III) Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War*, August 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 135.

*Geneva Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War*, August 12, 1949, 75 U.N.T.S. 287.

*HIV/AIDS and Human Rights: International Guidelines on HIV/AIDS*, 1998, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Geneva.

*Instructions for the Government of the United States in the Field by Order of the Secretary of War*, April 24, 1863 (Lieber Code).

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), letter, June 2001; available on-line at <http://www.ighrc.org/site/ighrc/section.php?id=5&detail=161>.

*Proceedings of the Preparatory Commission at its Eighth Session*, September 24–October 5, 2001, U.N. Doc. PCNICC/2001/L.3/Rev.1 Annex 3

Report of the UN Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Outcome of

the Fourth World Conference on Women, September 3, 1996, U.N. Doc. A/51/322.

Resolution F of the Rome Conference, adopted July 17, 1992, by the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court.

Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, U.N. Doc. A/CONF.183/9 (July 17, 1998), with corrections on the Web at <http://www.un.org/law/icc/statute/rome.htm>.

Rules of Procedure and Evidence for the International Criminal Court. *Official Records of the First Session of the Assembly of States Parties of the International Criminal Court*, September 3–10, 2002, Doc. ICC/ASP/1/3 at 10; available at [http://www.icc-cpi.int/docs/basicdocs/asp\\_records\(e\).pdf](http://www.icc-cpi.int/docs/basicdocs/asp_records(e).pdf).

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## **Nongovernmental Organizations' Role In the Buildup and Implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325**

**O**n October 23, 2000, women from Sierra Leone, Guatemala, Somalia, Tanzania, and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) addressed the United Nations Security Council in what has become known as an Arria Formula meeting, revealing the gender-specific conditions and acts that women experience in war. They also addressed the undervalued, underutilized leadership women demonstrate in conflict prevention, peace building, and rebuilding war-torn societies. The following day, under the presidency of Namibia, the Security Council held an open session, during which more than forty speakers addressed the issues of women, peace, and security. As a result of this debate the Security Council unanimously passed Resolution 1325 on October 31, 2000.

The Arria Formula dates back to 1993, when Diego Arria, Venezuela's ambassador to the United Nations, invited members of the Security Council to gather over coffee to hear the views of a Bosnian priest, creating an informal exchange between Security Council members and NGOs. Since 1999, the Arria Formula has been used more regularly to provide expertise and testimony on thematic issues taken up by the Security Council, in particular on humanitarian issues, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, children and armed conflict, and, more recently, on women, peace, and security.

In the past, the Security Council had condemned atrocities against women and stressed women's plight and suffering in armed conflict, as well as urging all parties to take special measures to protect women and girls from rape and other forms of gender-based violence. However, women's issues had not been integrated consistently in the council's activities; nor did the council officially recognize women's roles as agents of peace. All that changed with Resolution 1325.

As Sanam Naraghi-Anderlini writes, "On the face of it, this is just

another Resolution that may or may not be implemented. But for women's groups involved in peace building in war zones worldwide, it is a historic statement, with significant implications" (2000). Because it provides a tool for women to become equal participants at all negotiating tables, for the protection of women and girls during armed conflict, and for gender sensitivity in all UN missions including peacekeeping, Resolution 1325 has been received, quoted, and used by an enthusiastic constituency of women's and peace groups throughout the world. The resolution appears as an appendix to this report.

The resolution has generated many activities. Meetings have occurred between women's organizations and the Security Council; NGOs have produced documents monitoring the progress of its implementation and have held regional consultations in Africa, South Asia, and Europe, developing new information-sharing networks; and the Inter-Agency Taskforce on Women, Peace, and Security at the United Nations has coordinated a system-wide implementation strategy. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) appointed two independent experts to prepare a report on the issue, and the UN Secretary-General has also prepared a study and report.

The successful introduction and ratification of Resolution 1325 lies in three aspects of the UN system. First, the ideas and language in the resolution were built on documents and treaties passed through the UN system since its inception in 1945. In other words, the concept did not suddenly occur to the UN system. Second, international and grassroots nongovernmental efforts have historically provided information and analysis to the Security Council. Third, cooperation between the Namibian presidency of the Security Council, the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), UNIFEM, and NGOs was possible and was very successful in this instance due to a synergistic relationship that had taken decades to establish. All of these elements helped to identify and bring the experiences and expertise of women into the realm of the Security Council.

### **The buildup to Security Council Resolution 1325**

The discussion around women, peace, and security took center stage in 1998, when the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) debated the obstacles to implementing the chapter of the Beijing Platform for Action, the document that resulted from the Fourth World Conference on Women, devoted to women and armed conflict. During the CSW, Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury of Bangladesh presided over the Se-

curity Council. His statement on March 8, 2000, provided a shot of enthusiasm and encouragement for the women gathered at the CSW by linking equality, development, peace, and the need for women's urgent involvement in these matters. Seeing his statement as an opportunity to take the issue of women, peace, and security to the Security Council, the Women and Armed Conflict caucus, a group of NGOs working around the issue, organized several events to provide further information to Security Council members. At one such event, Security Council members were invited to participate in a discussion with the caucus on the issue. Security Council delegations from Bangladesh, Canada, China, Macedonia, the Netherlands, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States accepted the invitation. Women from conflict zones presented their experiences, tailoring their comments and recommendations to the specific mandate of the Security Council. The issues raised included the conversion of military resources to social endeavors, the inclusion of women in all levels of decision making, the implementation of gender- and age-specific measures in conflict situations and for refugees and displaced persons, the allocation of resources to empower women, and the need for peacekeepers to receive sensitivity training before they are assigned to missions.

At this meeting, Ambassador Chowdhury spoke on behalf of the Security Council and reinforced his support for the role of women in peace efforts. He also informed the women that he was working with other colleagues to devote a session of the Security Council to discussing the roles of women in armed conflict and peace and requested their help in garnering support from the fourteen other Security Council members on the issue. He believed that with combined efforts they could achieve the special session. To follow up, the caucus convened another meeting with Security Council members in June, during the Special Session on Women 2000, which was a review of achievements in the five years since the Beijing Women's Conference.

The Women and Armed Conflict Caucus also made the following recommendations to Security Council members in a briefing paper provided to all delegations:

- Commission a report on the requirements for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict and the means to increase the participation of women of all ages in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peace building.
- Issue a resolution regarding the requirements for the protection of women and girls in armed conflict and the means for increasing women's participation in peace and security matters.
- Appoint an advisor on gender issues to the Security Council and

ensure that all Security Council actions in regard to conflict, security, and peace include advisors on gender issues.

- Employ a wider range of nonviolent conflict prevention and intervention mechanisms, including unarmed interposition forces and expert teams in conflict resolution comprised of equal numbers of women and men.
- Encourage all member states that contribute to peacekeeping forces to ensure appropriate training of those forces in gender and cultural sensitivity. Additionally, the United Nations should provide on-site training on human rights with special attention to the human rights of women.
- Establish procedures for drawing on the expertise, experiences, and resources of civil society in regard to all matters of conflict, peace, and security, in particular the experience of women's organizations and initiatives.

After the CSW ended, the Hague Appeal for Peace, International Alert (IA), the International Women's Tribunal Center, the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) created the NGO Working Group on Women and International Peace and Security. The NGO Working Group agreed to pursue two recommendations—to encourage women's participation in peace agreements and to push for the convening of a special session of the Security Council on women, peace, and security. The WILPF, which had convened the Women and Armed Conflict Caucus, went on to play a coordinating role in the NGO Working Group by initiating meetings among NGOs with Angela King, assistant secretary general and special adviser on gender issues and advancement of women, and working with UNIFEM to discuss the possibility of Security Council action on women.

The first task was to meet with each Security Council mission. The NGO Working Group collected the best contemporary literature on the subject and presented it to each delegation, with a summary of each document. The group generated a list of experts and NGOs that would speak to those issues if Security Council members wished to access a wider range of opinion. Because Namibia had hosted the meeting that led to the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations, the NGO Working Group approached the meeting with Namibian Ambassador Martin Andjaba with a great deal of hope that Namibia

would consider holding the open session during its October presidency of the Security Council.<sup>1</sup>

Through the months of July and August, the NGO Working Group continued to hold meetings with other members of the Security Council in the hope of widening the base of support beyond Namibia and Bangladesh. To garner support outside the Security Council and increase advocacy efforts, the NGO Working Group strategized and planned with a broad and diverse group of NGOs and the press, informing them of developments in New York and encouraging groups to develop relationships with relevant departments in the capitals of Security Council member states.

Finally, early in September 2000, Namibia announced that the Security Council, under its presidency, would hold an open session on women, peace, and security. Members of the NGO Working Group celebrated with enthusiasm. At last, women would be walking into the Security Council chambers to give their own accounts of the impact of armed conflict on their lives and societies and to present their own appropriate, effective strategies for conflict prevention, resolution, and peace building.

During the months of September and October, NGO Working Group members continued to meet with members of the Security Council and to provide important background documents to help them prepare for the open session. They also prepared a document with NGO recommendations and a draft resolution for the Security Council's consideration. The NGO Working Group invited women experts to bring their concerns and strategies to the open session. Inonge Mbikusita-Lewanika from the Organization of African Unity African Women's Committee on Peace and Democracy, Isha Dyfan from WILPF-Sierra Leone, Luz Mendez from the National Union of Guatemalan Women, and Somali delegate Faiza Jama Mohamed from the Africa Office of Equality Now in Kenya accepted the invitation and came to New York to address the Security Council in the Arria Formula and to observe the open session. Other participants in the Arria Formula were Eugenia Piza-Lopez from IA, Mary F. Diaz from the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Anne Burke from Amnesty International, Cora Weiss from the Hague Appeal for Peace,

<sup>1</sup> The Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action were generated during a seminar on "Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations," organized by the Lessons Learned Unit of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and hosted by the government of Namibia from May 29 to May 31, 2000. Available at <http://www.reliefweb.int/library/GHARkt/Docfiles/WindhoekDecl.doc>.

and Betty Reardon from the Peace Education Program at Columbia University Teachers College.<sup>2</sup>

The following day, the public gallery of the Security Council chamber was filled with women. There was a lot of clapping—something unheard of in that particular chamber—and the word *historic* was used repeatedly. At last, women's perspectives on war and peace became visible in the Security Council through more than forty speeches.<sup>3</sup> Some of the recommendations from the NGO Working Group, including some of the language from the group's draft resolution, were put into the text of the resolution adopted on October 31.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Implementation of Resolution 1325**

Now that Resolution 1325 exists, the task is to implement and put into operation its recommendations and to ensure that women's groups receive concrete, practical financial and technical support. The UN system in general, and the Security Council in particular, must move from words to action. The NGO Working Group remains a solid coalition to ensure the broadest support and implementation for all the elements of Resolution 1325.

Since the passage of Resolution 1325, reports on UN peacekeeping operations in East Timor, Afghanistan (United Nations 2000), the Democratic Republic of Congo (United Nations 2001b), Western Sahara (United Nations 2001a), and other countries have included gender provisions, but the information provided in reports to the Security Council has been limited. However, the demand for women to be included in decision making and in peace and security negotiations has had some effect. Women have been included in the talks on the reconstruction of Afghanistan and in the Inter-Congolese Dialogue.

### **Second Arria Formula on women, peace, and security, October 30, 2001**

On October 30, 2001, Security Council delegations met with women's NGOs for a second time in an Arria Formula meeting at the UN Head-

<sup>2</sup> Arria Formula meetings are "off the record"; therefore, what was discussed at the meeting cannot be disclosed. However, the speeches of all participants can be found at <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/arria/arriaindex.html>.

<sup>3</sup> All forty-one statements can be found on-line at <http://www.peacewomen.org/un/sc/countrystatements/cstatements.html>.

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed analysis of the resolution, see Naraghi-Anderlini 2000.

quarters in New York. Council members heard statements from Elisabeth Rehn, an independent expert on the impact of armed conflict on women and women's role in peace building; Natércia Godinho-Adams of East Timor; Jamila, an activist from Afghanistan (who, like many Afghans, uses only one name); Haxhere Veseli from Kosovo/Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; and Maha Muna of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. During this discussion, women from the grass roots reminded the Security Council that they had decided to "remain actively seized on the matter" and that women still account for the largest number of victims in situations of armed conflict and the smallest number of decision makers.

The NGO Working Group also gave the Security Council members documentation of the implementation of Resolution 1325 in the year since its unanimous adoption. With this meeting, the NGO Working Group tried to maintain the momentum captured a year before and to keep Security Council members committed to the implementation of Resolution 1325. The meeting proved of particular importance given the U.S. attacks in Afghanistan and the limited role women had been able to play in the region.

As a result of the meeting, the Security Council issued a presidential statement on October 31, 2001. In this statement, read by Brian Cowen, minister for foreign affairs of Ireland, the Security Council reaffirmed its strong support for increasing women's role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution. It also renewed its call for states to include women in negotiations and the implementation of peace accords, constitutions, and strategies for resettlement and rebuilding. On the issue of empowerment, the Security Council urged member states to redouble their efforts to nominate women candidates as special representatives to the Secretary-General or special envoys to peace missions. The Security Council also reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to include, in his reporting, progress in gender mainstreaming throughout United Nations peacekeeping missions and on other aspects relating to women and girls in matters of peace and security.

#### **Efforts of NGOs in the Implementation of Resolution 1325**

The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security continues to develop strategies to implement Resolution 1325. Following are some examples of the efforts of member organizations and partner NGOs around the world.

*Women's Caucus for Gender Justice.* Nearly a year before the second



Arria Formula meeting, the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice held a public hearing on December 11, 2000. This one-day public hearing of testimonies on crimes from ongoing war and conflict situations around the world immediately followed the Tokyo Tribunal on Japanese military sexual slavery. This event demonstrated that the crimes against the former "comfort women" during World War II were not isolated incidents specific to the events around the war. Battles are increasingly fought over women's bodies, and women continue to be used as war weapons. The hearing gathered testimony from twelve conflict zones, including Chiapas, Mexico, Colombia, Guatemala, Algeria, Congo, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, former Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Burma, Cambodia, East Timor, and Indonesia. The testimonies showed how the lack of accountability for crimes already committed enables the unabated continuation of such crimes. Innocent civilians, women, and children continue to pay the price for the refusal of world powers to learn lessons from the horrendous experiences of war. The hearing not only presented painful experiences of women who had been victimized by war but also provided a forum to discuss initiatives in each of these places to demand justice, exemplified by the experiences of women who joined resistance movements and organized work for peace and justice. The public hearing encouraged the ongoing work of women for genuine justice, peace, and an end to impunity.

*The NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security.* The NGO Working Group has undertaken a great deal of communication and outreach work, including the printing and distribution of twenty thousand copies of the resolution. To celebrate the first anniversary of Resolution 1325, the NGO Working Group held a luncheon in New York, inviting key government and UN decision makers, and launched a comprehensive listing of all implementation activities undertaken by governments, the UN system, and NGOs (NGO Working Group on Women and International Peace and Security 2001). The NGO Working Group has provided analysis and guidance to Lakhdar Brahimi, the United Nations' special representative for Afghanistan, organizing interfaces between him and Afghan women. During the 2002 Commission on the Status of Women, working-group members held twelve events to bring attention to Resolution 1325. Two interactive workshops organized by the NGO Working Group trained more than one hundred people on ways to advocate and implement the resolution. The NGO Working Group also organized a well-attended panel for International Women's Day. In addition, member organizations conducted three video screenings and discussions; sponsored panels on gender equality in refugee settings, on gen-

der and peace support operations, on media women's perspectives on international peace and security, and on war widows; and organized less formal lunchtime discussions on various aspects of gender and peace issues.

*International Alert.* On March 8, 2001, IA's Women Building Peace campaign handed Special Advisor Angela King more than 100,000 signatures from more than 140 countries, from women, women's organizations, and civil society groups working for peace and social justice, in support of women's demands for protection, participation in decision making, and an end to impunity for crimes committed against women. During the same month IA published and disseminated "Raising Women's Voices for Peacebuilding: Vision, Impact and Limitations of Media Technologies" (McKay and Mazurana 2001) to a wide range of policy makers, academics, and the media. The publication provides an accessible means for increasing the knowledge of women's responses to violent conflict and peace building, explores how women have used communication technologies in their peace-building work, and highlights the innovative and effective results they have achieved using extremely limited resources. International Alert developed a monitoring framework for core issues in Resolution 1325 that will be used in case study countries, initially Nigeria, the Southern Caucasus, and Nepal. The framework suggests measurable indicators through which key issues of gender mainstreaming can be monitored. It aims to identify the extent to which Resolution 1325 has been internalized and could potentially be developed and supported, as well as to identify gaps in areas not covered by the resolution.

*Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, Protection, and Participation Project.* The Women's Commission is carrying out an assessment to review policies and practices related to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) protection responsibilities vis-à-vis women refugees and with regard to gender equality. The assessment considers the measures taken by UNHCR over the past decade in response to the particular needs and risks faced by women covered by the UNHCR mandate. It describes how the principles contained in the Guidelines for the Protection of Refugee Women (United Nations High Commissioner for Women [UNHCR] 1991) relate to ongoing practice and analyzes how structures of organization, channels of communication, lines of reporting and accountability, and resource constraints in UNHCR headquarters and in the field may facilitate or impede progress. In April 2001, the Women's Commission released "You Cannot Dance if You Cannot Stand: A Review of the Rwanda Women's Initiative and the UNHCR's Commitment to Gender Equality in Post-conflict Situations" (Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children 2001). The report highlights the strengths

and weaknesses of the Rwanda Women's Initiative (RWI), providing lessons learned about the potential role for women in postconflict reconstruction and for future women's initiatives. The report also provides specific recommendations for the future of RWI. From May to July 2001, for the second in a series of four participatory studies with adolescents, the Women's Commission carried out a study in northern Uganda that involved fifty-four adolescent researchers and more than twenty adults from the community to identify key concerns facing adolescents and to propose solutions to their problems as part of an international campaign to increase services and protection for and with adolescents affected by armed conflict.

*Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.* An important lesson learned from the Security Council process is that women's peace initiatives are scattered and diffuse. Without a cohesive front, words sometimes get lost in the wind. To address these issues, WILPF created the Peace Women project. In July 2001, WILPF organized an international seminar in Geneva on the Israeli-Palestinian crisis, featuring women from every country in the Middle East, with a special focus on Security Council Resolution 1325. On October 31, 2001, the first anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325, WILPF launched the PeaceWomen.org Web site. The concept of PeaceWomen.org evolved and grew, eventually adopting its current format. Through consultations, group meetings, and a generous grant from the Ford Foundation, the Peace Women team brings together information from women and women's organizations working for peace around the world into a repository Web site where communication is nurtured and accurate information is exchanged and made accessible. Thus it became impossible for the United Nations, and the Security Council in particular, to avoid women's voices. This electronic repository of information collects an enormous amount of information, in five main sections:

- *Resources:* This section includes a comprehensive and annotated bibliography of books, articles, and analyses on women's peace theory and activities, as well as NGO, government, and UN position papers and reports and tools for building and reinforcing women's organizations.
- *Contacts:* This section provides listings of contact information for women's NGOs working on peace and justice issues, as well as listings of governmental and UN programs in the field.
- *United Nations:* This part of the site deciphers the UN system so women at the grassroots level can use it. It routinely tracks references

to women and peace made in the different forums and departments of the United Nations. The Web site also provides urgently needed information about peacekeeping operations—contact details for those responsible for writing reports and for feeding information to the Security Council. It also provides a detailed listing of UN personnel in the field, through its Peacekeeping Watch campaign.

- *Campaigns*: This section presents the outreach and campaigning tools and materials produced by organizations the world over. In the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001, and the subsequent events that occurred in Afghanistan, the Peace Women project started its own campaigns by compiling statements from women involved in peace work from around the world. Due to great need and response, the project team developed campaigns on Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Israel-Palestine to raise the visibility of efforts to include women in peace processes and consequently to exercise pressure for the inclusion of more women.
- *News*: This section provides the latest news on women and peace. It also provides early warnings by linking to extensive networks of women involved in peace efforts.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusions

The words of Security Council Resolution 1325 must continue to be transferred into action. The international community must ensure that women are included at every level of peace and security, from local community action to international criminal tribunals for countries emerging from conflict. This process will take some time. But as the buildup to this resolution and cooperation between NGOs, UN entities, and member states have shown, we can ensure that it will occur. In 2000, the doors were open just wide enough for women to squeeze into a Security Council debate for the first time. Concerned women and men must now act on the words of Resolution 1325 to assure that the door remains open permanently.

*Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, New York*

<sup>5</sup> This Web site is continuously growing, raising visibility, and reinforcing peace efforts. For any additions or comments, contact [www.info@peacewomen.org](mailto:www.info@peacewomen.org).

## Appendix

### Resolution 1325 (2000) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 4,213th Meeting, October 31, 2000

#### *The Security Council,*

*Recalling* its resolutions 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999, 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000 and 1314 (2000) of 11 August 2000, as well as relevant statements of its President, and *recalling also* the statement of its President to the press on the occasion of the United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace (International Women's Day) of 8 March 2000 (SC/6816),

*Recalling also* the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (A/52/231) as well as those contained in the outcome document of the twenty-third Special Session of the United Nations General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: Gender Equality, Development and Peace for the Twenty-First Century" (A/S-23/10/Rev.1), in particular those concerning women and armed conflict,

*Bearing in mind* the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and the primary responsibility of the Security Council under the Charter for the maintenance of international peace and security,

*Expressing* concern that civilians, particularly women and children, account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, and increasingly are targeted by combatants and armed elements, and *recognizing* the consequent impact this has on durable peace and reconciliation,

*Reaffirming* the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and *stressing* the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution,

*Reaffirming also* the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women and girls during and after conflicts,

*Emphasizing* the need for all parties to ensure that mine clearance and mine awareness programmes take into account the special needs of women and girls,

*Recognizing* the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and in this regard *noting* the Windhoek Declaration and the Namibia Plan of Action on Mainstreaming a Gender Perspective in Multidimensional Peace Support Operations (S/2000/693),

*Recognizing also* the importance of the recommendation contained in the statement of its President to the press of 8 March 2000 for specialized training for all peacekeeping personnel on the protection, special needs and human rights of women and children in conflict situations,

*Recognising* that an understanding of the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, effective institutional arrangements to guarantee their protection and full participation in the peace process can significantly contribute to the maintenance and promotion of international peace and security,

*Noting* the need to consolidate data on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls,

1. *Urges* Member States to ensure increased representation of women at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict;

2. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to implement his strategic plan of action (A/49/587) calling for an increase in the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict resolution and peace processes;

3. *Urges* the Secretary-General to appoint more women as special representatives and envoys to pursue good offices on his behalf, and in this regard *calls on* Member States to provide candidates to the Secretary-General, for inclusion in a regularly updated centralized roster;

4. *Further urges* the Secretary-General to seek to expand the role and contribution of women in United Nations field-based operations, and especially among military observers, civilian police, human rights and humanitarian personnel;

5. *Expresses* its willingness to incorporate a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations, and *urges* the Secretary-General to ensure that, where appropriate, field operations include a gender component;

6. *Requests* the Secretary-General to provide to Member States training guidelines and materials on the protection, rights and the particular needs of women, as well as on the importance of involving women in all peacekeeping and peace-building measures, *invites* Member States to incorporate these elements as well as HIV/AIDS awareness training into their national training programmes for military and civilian police personnel in preparation for deployment, and *further requests* the Secretary-General to ensure that civilian personnel of peacekeeping operations receive similar training;

7. *Urges* Member States to increase their voluntary financial, technical and logistical support for gender-sensitive training efforts, including those undertaken by relevant funds and programmes, inter alia, the United Nations Fund for Women and United Nations Children's Fund, and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and other relevant bodies;

8. *Calls on* all actors involved, when negotiating and implementing peace agreements, to adopt a gender perspective, including, inter alia:

(a) The special needs of women and girls during repatriation and resettlement and for rehabilitation, reintegration and post-conflict reconstruction;

(b) Measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes for conflict resolution, and that involve women in all of the implementation mechanisms of the peace agreements;

(c) Measures that ensure the protection of and respect for human rights of women and girls, particularly as they relate to the constitution, the electoral system, the police and the judiciary;

9. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect fully international law applicable to the rights and protection of women and girls, especially as civilians, in particular the obligations applicable to them under the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977, the Refugee Convention of 1951 and the Protocol thereto of 1967, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 1979 and the Optional Protocol thereto of 1999 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989 and the two Optional Protocols thereto of 25 May 2000, and to bear in mind the relevant provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

10. *Calls on* all parties to armed conflict to take special measures to protect women and girls from gender-based violence, particularly rape and other forms of sexual abuse, and all other forms of violence in situations of armed conflict;

11. *Emphasizes* the responsibility of all States to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes including those relating to sexual and other violence against women and girls, and in this regard *stresses* the need to exclude these crimes, where feasible from amnesty provisions;

12. *Calls upon* all parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements, and to take into account the particular needs of women and girls, including in their design, and recalls its resolutions 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 and 1296 (2000) of 19 April 2000;

13. *Encourages* all those involved in the planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration to consider the different needs of female and male ex-combatants and to take into account the needs of their dependants;

14. *Reaffirms* its readiness, whenever measures are adopted under Article 41 of the Charter of the United Nations, to give consideration to their potential impact on the civilian population, bearing in mind the special needs of women and girls, in order to consider appropriate humanitarian exemptions;

15. *Expresses* its willingness to ensure that Security Council missions take into account gender considerations and the rights of women, including through consultation with local and international women's groups;

16. *Invites* the Secretary-General to carry out a study on the impact of armed conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace-building and the gender dimensions of peace processes and conflict resolution, and *further invites* him to submit a report to the Security Council on the results of this study and to make this available to all Member States of the United Nations;

17. *Requests* the Secretary-General, where appropriate, to include in

his reporting to the Security Council progress on gender mainstreaming throughout peacekeeping missions and all other aspects relating to women and girls;

18. *Decides* to remain actively seized of the matter.

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## Women and War in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

**A**pril 2001: it is already dark as we arrive at the congregation where we will be spending the night. I catch a glimpse of the moonlit shape of the imposing church next door. I do not see the jacaranda trees but know that they are here; I can smell their fragrance. Lake Tanganyika is still, the town quiet. Who could tell that this is a place at war, its population taken hostage by an armed insurgency fighting against the government?

A sister lights up the hurricane lamps. We are greeted by representatives of the church and groups from civil society who seem pleased to receive visitors and share details of their plight. Everybody talks about the return of peace and freedom, about a future when they might resume the farming of the land without fear of being killed. Women whisper stories of rapes, violence, and executions. They also explain how women have organized themselves to support their families and to keep faith that better days will come. They ask me about how women live in my country. They are isolated; there is no local radio, and there are no newspapers. I am there in the town of Kalemie, southeast Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as a military-civil liaison officer working for the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). In that capacity, I am on a fact-finding mission to collect information about the security situation in the region; I am aware that local groups of the civil society, especially women, always have firsthand information about what is going on in their area. However, the reality is that local women remain untapped resources and are rarely consulted by outsiders because their contribution is very often considered irrelevant to peace and security issues. I hope to collect enough evidence about the harrowing living conditions of these women and about their coping mechanisms; they want me to be a messenger, to spread the word both about their appalling circumstances and about their fortitude.

The views expressed herein are mine and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United Nations.

### **Background**

In September 1996, a civil war broke out when the governor of Kivu province, which is positioned along the border between Rwanda and Burundi, threatened to expel all Tutsi from the country. Fearing massacres by Rwandan Hutus and local militiamen, the Congolese Tutsi decided to organize their own protection. Rwanda subsequently provided military support to their Alliance des Forces Démocratiques pour la Libération du Congo (ADFL). This force led by Laurent Kabila had as its original aim securing Congo's borders against infiltration by Hutu Interahamwe, those responsible for the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. Rwandan troops emptied the border refugee camps, thus depriving the Hutu militia of their rear base, and forced many refugees to return to Rwanda. With additional support from Uganda, the ADFL then crossed the country to the capital, Kinshasa, and in May 1997 installed a new government and renamed Zaire the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Disagreements between the government of the DRC and its former allies, Uganda and Rwanda, became serious, and in 1998 Kabila sent the Rwandan soldiers back and announced that all foreign troops had to leave the country. Rwanda and Uganda responded by invading the DRC, and a Congolese rebel group called the Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (RCD) formed an antigovernment coalition of former allies of Kabila and former Mobutists. As a result of the conflict, the country was divided into three zones: the northern part, controlled by the Front de Libération du Congo (FLC) and supported by Uganda; the eastern part, controlled by the RCD with the support of Rwanda; and the western and southern parts under the control of the government in Kinshasa, with the support of Zimbabwe, Namibia, and Angola. In July 1999 all parties signed a cease-fire in Lusaka, Zambia. The Lusaka Cease-Fire Agreement provided for an Inter-Congolese Dialogue between the DRC government, the armed opposition, the unarmed opposition, and civil society. It also requested that the Organization of African Unity (OAU) assist in organizing the Dialogue under the aegis of a neutral facilitator. In January 2001, President Kabila was assassinated. His son, Joseph Kabila, took power at age twenty-nine.

### **The situation of women before the war**

Prior to the conflict, there was a gap between the law relating to women's rights and reality. The law states that Congolese women and men have equal rights and that a woman cannot be forced into marriage. It grants

women the right to vote and says they can enjoy the rights of inheritance. In reality, however, a woman could be turned out of the house of her deceased husband by her in-laws and be deprived of all goods the couple had acquired. Also, family law does say that the husband is the head of the household and must provide protection for his wife and that she must obey her husband (Association pour la Promotion, Protection, et Défense des Droits de la Femme 2001). Furthermore, a married woman needs her husband's authorization if she wants to undertake any activities outside the household (even applying for a passport). The law forbids polygamy, but tradition tolerates it. Even in the region where matriarchy is practiced, a man essentially remains head of household. For example, the uncle (brother of the mother) has more authority than the husband or the mother over her children.

Finally, many women work in the informal sector. Although 90 percent of the market traders are women, they do not hold positions of power on the committee that runs the markets. Women are also excluded from village meetings and other councils that determine local policy. Outsiders (nongovernmental organizations [NGOs], UN agencies) involved in designing strategies for empowering women in postconflict activities need to understand the real pressure on women to conform to norms that prevailed before the war. They also need to remember that Congolese women are not homogeneous. Differences exist related to women's social status, education, ethnic group, and their urban or rural origins.

### **How war affected women**

Today between 60 and 80 percent of women are single heads of households. Shortages of food, wood, water, and health care have created great burdens for them. Women and girls often have to travel long distances to find resources, inadvertently exposing themselves to violence by thugs roaming the countryside.

Between 15 and 20 percent of the Congolese army was made up of women who served as combatants, as support for soldiers, as sexual slaves, and in other ways. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs (DDR), then, have to reintegrate not only former male and female excombatants but their dependents as well (Farr 2002, 18). Most are expected to return to their community of origin, but local communities have suffered terribly from the war and are often not able to provide work. Crime and violence, including domestic violence, are often amplified when men return and have difficulties fitting into their community. Also, when

soldiers belonging to the Ugandan People's Defense Force (UPDF) were sent back home, they were ordered to leave behind their Congolese "wives" and children (News24.com 2002).

In eastern DRC, rape of women seems to have been widespread and committed by all parties to the conflict. As almost everywhere else in the world, women who have been victims of rape are rejected by their husbands and relatives, are reluctant to report rape, and have been exposed to sexually transmitted diseases.

A 2001 study by the International Rescue Committee showed that malnutrition and disease caused the majority of recent deaths (Roberts et al. 2001). It appears that continued fighting has compelled hundreds of thousands of men and women to seek refuge in the forests, where they have no access to food or medical assistance. Security issues have prevented relief organizations from reaching them.

#### **How women coped with war**

The war provided Congolese women with opportunities as well as burdens. They took over leadership positions and revived local networks. They were not mere victims as they fought for their survival.

War disrupted the tradition of women giving their income to their husbands. Women left alone were able to control their own income. Where front lines separated a town from its fields the price of corn could be multiplied by thirty, and women regularly tried to cross those lines at night with the aim of making a large profit. They also ran the risk of being killed (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs [OCHA] 2000, 22–27). While we can get a lot of information about women as victims, there is little documentation of what many observers believe was a great increase in women's independence and self-confidence.

#### **Congolese women's initiatives in the peace process**

The drafters of the Lusaka agreement were concerned about the acts of violence, including sexual violence, against civilians. Specifically, the agreement calls for "the creation of conditions conducive to the provision of urgent humanitarian assistance to displaced persons, refugees and other affected persons."<sup>1</sup> However, nothing is said about breaking down these groups by gender. Nor is there any provision in the 1999 agreement that

<sup>1</sup> Letter dated July 23, 1999, from the permanent representative of Zambia to the United Nations, addressed to the president of the Security Council, S/1999/815

would require that Congolese women take part in the final peace process or in the drafting of a new constitution. (UN Resolution 1325, passed in October 2000, does provide for such participation.)

After two years of delay, the Inter-Congolese Dialogue opened in October 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It soon ended in disagreement. A second round of peace talks was held in Sun City, South Africa, in March 2002. There the parties to the conflict tried to settle a dispute over whether or not the Dialogue had the authority to nominate a new government. The talks ended with the adoption of more than thirty resolutions on legal and political issues with the aim of satisfying the different stakeholders. In Pretoria, South Africa, in July 2002, the presidents of Rwanda and the DRC signed a peace agreement providing for the withdrawal of Rwandan troops from the DRC and the dismantling of the Interahamwe forces still on its territory.

Where were the women? Congolese women actively sought to participate in the peace process. In Kinshasa, 150 women's organizations were created. In the Kivus, the Réseau des Femmes pour la Défense des Droits et de la Paix (Women's Network for the Defense of Rights and Peace) was mobilized with the aim of sending representatives to the Dialogue, but its members found it was difficult to promote peace without endangering themselves. They received many threats from the rebel RCD, which accused them of destabilizing the town. Their office was ransacked many times, and peaceful demonstrations were systematically interrupted by the RCD "for security reasons."

When only one woman was designated to attend the preparatory meeting for the Dialogue, the facilitator appealed to the Lusaka signatories to increase the number of women (Integrated Regional Information Networks [IRIN] 2001). With the support of the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), he also proposed actions to strengthen capacity building for women's groups and to integrate gender issues into agenda items related to the electoral system, the judiciary, the constitution, humanitarian issues, and human rights.

Another initiative was the mission of the group called Peace and Solidarity of African Women. This mission was organized by Femmes Africa Solidarité (FAS), in cooperation with Women as Partners for Peace in Africa (WOPPA), and was led by Ruth Sando Perry, former head of state of Liberia (Femmes Africa Solidarité 2001). Its purpose was to promote the engendering of the Inter-Congolese Dialogue and to enhance the participation of Congolese women in the peace process. The visit sparked a new dynamism into the women's groups and also initiated a dialogue with the highest-ranking male decision makers about the importance of

innovative ideas about building peace and about creating a space for women's voices.

In February 2002, more than forty Congolese women representing different groups gathered to discuss ways to include more women in the Dialogue. They met in Nairobi, Kenya, where they drafted the Nairobi Declaration requesting a variety of actions aimed at integrating women's concerns into the peace process. They asked for an emergency plan that would integrate Congolese women's groups at all levels of responsibilities and decision making, and they requested that the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), already ratified by the government, be mentioned in the preamble of the country's new constitution. Finally, they launched an appeal to the international community to support their requests and asked the facilitator to try to integrate the Nairobi Declaration into the Dialogue (UN Development Fund for Women 2002).

#### **The role of the United Nations organization mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC)**

Based on the Secretary-General's recommendations, the UN Security Council in August 1999 authorized the deployment of up to ninety UN civilian and military liaison personnel to the capitals of the Lusaka signatory states and to the rear military headquarters of the main belligerents. Later, the Security Council authorized the expansion of the UN mission to a maximum strength of 5,537 military personnel, including up to five hundred observers and civilian support staff in the fields of humanitarian affairs, human rights, public information, political affairs, child protection, and administrative support.<sup>2</sup>

The MONUC mandate specifically takes into consideration the situation of women as victims of the conflict. However, women are not specified as participants in activities related to humanitarian assistance and human rights monitoring. Thus, once again, women are specified as vulnerable but not as valuable contributors. Another mandate of the MONUC is "to cooperate closely with the Facilitator of the National Dialogue, provide support and technical assistance to him, and coordinate other United Nations agencies' activities to that effect" (UN Security Council 2000). Thus, there is room in the interpretation of this mandate for MONUC to reach out to local women's organizations. However, at

<sup>2</sup> Resolution 1291, adopted by the UN Security Council at its 4,104th meeting on February 24, 2000, S/RES/1291 (2000).

the mission level, attention has mainly been given to political and civil society groups composed almost entirely of men. (This has started to change with the appointment of a senior gender advisor to the mission.)

It is apparent that if women are not included at the beginning of the peace process, it is more difficult to insert them at a later stage. Indeed, international actors often unintentionally undermine the work of local women and overlook their potential. This emphasizes the importance of recruiting more female peacekeepers, both military and civilian, who will bring different perspectives to the mission (Anderlini 2001, 33). As of March 2002, there were 148 international women working in MONUC, 26 percent of the total international staff. Out of these only two occupied senior positions, and none held a policy-making position. (There were nine men occupying senior positions and four more at a decision-making level.)<sup>8</sup> Recently, however, Lena Sundh of Sweden was made the deputy special representative of the Secretary-General for MONUC. There is currently only one woman special representative of the Secretary-General in UN peacekeeping. She serves in the UN Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). Her deputy is also a woman, as is the deputy chief of the mission in Guatemala.

There is no question that UN policies on women and the peace process are very different from the recent past. Implementation may be uneven, but initiatives have been taken. For instance, I participated in the delivery of the DPKO Training and Evaluation Service's Gender Training Package, in its French version, for an audience of newly arrived MONUC military observers. We invited representatives of the local community, men and women, to share their experiences with peacekeepers. It was very moving to see one young woman talk about the Congolese women who turned to prostitution because they do not have other means of livelihood. She concluded that if a peacekeeper wanted to help the local community, he could use his own money in a more respectful way—by financing a micro-project, for instance.

When peacekeepers are trained to be gender sensitive, they do better work. As a general rule, when required to do needs assessments of local communities, they would speak to the community leaders or elders who are almost invariably men and would not see or look for a women leadership cadre. For example, because it is a visible project, peacekeepers sometimes recommend the construction of a school. But rarely do they ask about the gender implications of such a project. What about the local teachers? If women have filled positions after the Congolese men enrolled

<sup>8</sup> Figures kindly provided by the Personnel Section of MONUC.

in the war, will they be allowed to continue teaching when the men return? What will be the enrollment rate for boys and girls? Will the girls have the same opportunities as the boys to attend, considering that they may be needed at home to help a mother overwhelmed as a single head of household? Is the school in a safe area?

### **Lessons learned**

The story of women and war in the DRC is in many ways an old and often repeated one. Women are victims, resourceful survivors, and out of the public eye in both instances. Still, international organizations working in war-torn countries have become more cognizant of women's issues, and at least at the level of policy many gains have been made for women. In the field, though, there is a constant struggle for resources. Outsiders confront social environments that do not necessarily welcome the principles that guide the outsiders' work.

For example, the peace table is itself an important site. It is now accepted that unarmed representatives of society may be included there and that women may be included, too. But what must happen for women to be automatically included at the earliest stages of the peace process rather than as a result of outside pressure (as in Afghanistan, Burundi, and the DRC) and only at the last formulation of the process? How is the gap (when few women participate) between women's effective performance in war and in surviving war and their reemergence at the peace table to be explained? If the men in power continue to depict women primarily as war widows, victims, or heroic mothers, we have little room for post-conflict social transformation (Enloe 2002, 29).

And how should one theorize about the postwar disappearance of women's apparent new independence and confidence? Do independence and confidence, in fact, disappear? Or is it a matter of relief from wartime burdens? Is there a reversion to norms that had apparently changed but that, in fact, had only been suspended? While women in wartime often fill nontraditional roles, the society itself may not evolve. And do some, even many, women cherish a return to "normalcy"? Or is it imposed? Women may not always be aware of the changes that happen in their lives during a conflict and may not understand those changes as a source of opportunity or power (Mcintjes, Pillay, and Turshen 2001, 9). Military wives in the United States recount the different roles they play when their husbands are abroad and when they return home: competence and self-sufficiency in the first case, nurturance in the second. Both are a shadow



of what women in conflict zones have experienced, but these wives describe these apparently dichotomous roles as comfortable and not in conflict with each other.

How can outsiders support local women without damaging their credibility? Does it make a difference if the outsiders are not Western or Northern but from the same continent? Does it make a difference if the support comes from male leadership? And how do international agencies choose the groups of local women they deal with? When trying to facilitate their access to the peace table, outsiders often look for groups of women who are "representative" of their community. Do they apply the same representative requirements for groups of men? Or do they include all stakeholders, all representatives of excombatants?

How are we to document women's value in sustaining much of the population during conflict? How can we ensure that outside senior leaders are prepared to implement UN policies related to gender mainstreaming? And how are we to understand local men's reaction to the change in their roles from war to a postconflict environment? In a stricken country is there an understanding of anything other than a zero sum game? Is any advance in income or position taken by a woman seen as a loss for a man? We have grasped that war changes gender roles but not paid much attention to the consequences of those changes for men.

Finally, when and why are women's organizations suppressed? Is suppression a measure of near success? Should new organizations seeking increased power simply expect suppression, attack, or worse as they begin to succeed? Women's peace-related activities are often perceived as an extension of their household responsibilities, as a soft issue inessential to security. But if they are not taken seriously, why are women often prevented from getting involved in peaceful demonstrations? Are they a threat to security or just to local power holders?

"There is no aftermath for women," write Sheila Meintjes, Ann Pillay, and Meredith Turshen (2001, 3). The postconflict situation is often too late for the promotion of women's rights and the consolidation of gains they made during the war in terms of empowerment and access to and control of resources. By then patriarchal power has returned, although it may not be immediately visible because the emphasis put on human rights by the international community conceals a return to prewar norms and roles. We need to do more research on the period between the end of hostilities and postconflict development programs to see how we can better use this apparent vacuum to advance women's continued participation in public life and national reconstruction. As Turshen writes, "War also de-

stroys the patriarchal structures of society that confine and degrade women. In the very breakdown of morals, traditions, customs, and community, war also opens up and creates new beginnings" (1998, 20).

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## Gender and Peacekeeping: The United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor

**T**heorists pursue concepts that describe and explain, and often prescribe, while policy makers create strategies and rules designed to bring about particular outcomes. Implementers of policy struggle with a variety of complications and rarely achieve the precise goals of policy makers or fulfill theorists' prescriptions, but they are the ones who engage "the real world," I hope policy makers and theorists will find this account of the effort to implement United Nations policies on gender equality in the creation of a new state, East Timor, helpful in their work.

The Portuguese colonized East Timor, half of an island in the Indonesian archipelago, in the 1500s. The Dutch, though, colonized most of the archipelago. Following World War II Indonesia secured its independence from the Netherlands and, on December 7, 1975, invaded East Timor and declared the territory its twenty-seventh province. Although an impoverished and economically stagnant colonial outpost with low levels of literacy and health care, East Timor resisted, and women were an important part of the resistance. Indeed, one of the first to be killed was Muki Bonaparte, a young socialist. The following months witnessed the imprisonment, rape, and torture of hundreds of women, especially those belonging to the OPMT (Organizacao Popular de Mulher Timor, the political organization of East Timorese women). By the 1980s women were providing support in the form of health care, food, clothing, and money to the armed resistance. They had also formed all-women armed units as well as a brigade, which fought alongside the male guerrillas, "baby in one arm, gun in the other" (Almeida 1996, 101).

Carolina do Rosario, an OPMT activist and a survivor of imprisonment, stated, "They rape especially those women whose husbands are guerrillas. The military comes and rapes a woman and says 'if you refuse to collaborate with us and give us information about your husband, we will rape you again!' She refuses to inform on her husband and friends, and so they rape her and later kill her. It is not only one soldier who rapes her but also many soldiers. This is what happens to us all the time" (Watson 2001,

42). In spite of their suffering and active resistance, women have been largely unrecognized for their role in the liberation struggle.

The Nobel Peace Prize committee brought East Timor's resistance to the world's attention in 1996 by awarding prizes to two leaders of the resistance, and in 1999 the East Timorese were given the opportunity to vote on independence under United Nations sponsorship. Immediately after the overwhelming vote for independence the Indonesian military's Operasi Sapu Jagad (Operation Global Clean Sweep) began. United Nations peacekeepers arrived to provide security within a month, but by then Indonesian forces and their associated militia had laid the country to waste. The civilian population was attacked, homes burned, livestock slain, agriculture tools and machinery destroyed. Ninety percent of the infrastructure was destroyed, including schools, health centers, sanitation systems, power plants, and government buildings and records (Taylor 1999, xxiii). Further, gender-specific human rights violations were not uncommon, as the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Mary Robinson, reported.

### **Gender and peacekeeping**

Within another month the United Nations decided to establish the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET). Its mandate went well beyond providing security, to first administering the new nation and then to assisting in the building of a government and an economy almost from scratch for a very small country with a population of less than a million (UN Security Council Resolution 1999). The UNTAET was unique in having these nation-building responsibilities. It was also unique in that the regulation delineating the authority of the transitional administration clearly stated that "all persons undertaking public duties or holding public office in East Timor shall observe internationally recognized human rights standards . . . [including] The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women of 17 December 1979" (UNTAET 1999).

In the original planning a Gender Affairs Unit was placed in the office of the top official, the special representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG). Due to budgetary constraints the unit disappeared before the UNTAET mission began its work. It was reestablished in mid-2000 but in the office of the deputy SRSG for Governance and Public Administration, the key pillar (division) of the mission, which was to evolve into the Transitional Administration of East Timor, which, in turn, would hand

over responsibility to East Timor's first independent government in May 2002.

### **The Gender Affairs Unit**

A key event for the Gender Affairs Unit was the First Congress of Women of Timor Loro Sae, which was held in June 2000. The congress was organized by an umbrella group, REDE (the Portuguese word for "organization"), which represented some fifteen women's organizations, most of them from urban areas, particularly Dili, the capital. Particular demands of the First Congress included: first, mechanisms for transparency and accountability in government; second, a consultative process for constitution building; third, resources for women's empowerment including training in leadership and political participation; fourth, increased representation of women in the National Consultative Council created by UNTAET (with a specific request that women fill a minimum of 30 percent of all places in all sectors of the transitional government); and finally, a public information campaign on violence against women.

The SRSG of UNTAET, Sergio Vieira de Mello, had an "open door" policy for the women of East Timor, one that was to ensure that they were included in the process of nation building and that their issues were raised at the highest levels. He met with representatives of the Women's Congress and accepted their platform for action, circulating it to all departments in the Governance and Public Administration pillar. This gave their priorities a high profile within the peacekeeping mission, and such high-level commitment enabled the Gender Affairs Unit to establish a program in conjunction with East Timorese women, focusing on their issues.

The Gender Affairs Unit was composed of six international staff: a senior gender specialist, a program specialist, a legislative and policy analyst, a statistician, a communication and information specialist, and a civil society and district liaison officer. The unit's priority was to ensure gender mainstreaming in the future Timorese government. This was in accord with the United Nations' 1997 Economic and Social Council Resolution on gender mainstreaming and with Security Council Resolution 1325 (October 31, 2000) on Women, Peace, and Security, which specifically applied gender equality principles to peacekeeping missions.

One important activity was the bimonthly gender training given to all new staff. Participants from other UNTAET units, such as military and police forces, district gender focal points, UN agency staff, and civil society

organizations, also received quarterly training. Since government documents had been destroyed in the crisis following the 1999 popular consultation, collecting quantitative and qualitative data was essential to the development of policies. A key function of the gender unit was gender analysis and sex-disaggregated data collection, particularly concerning refugees returning from West Timor, and school enrollments, which contributed to an understanding of the gendered impact of postconflict reconstruction. The first comprehensive study examining women's health issues, education, economic empowerment, and participation in decision making was completed with financial support from Ireland Aid. This study is now being used by the Office for Promotion of Equality in the independent government of Timor Leste.

The Gender and the Law Working Group, composed of East Timorese judges, prosecutors, public defenders, and representatives of civil society organizations, played a crucial role, reviewing all UNTAET regulations and proposed legislation. Attention was also given to the justice system. Domestic violence was of particular concern, since many viewed it as a family matter rather than a societal problem. The civilian police created a Vulnerable Persons Unit (VPU) that included women officers and interpreters. Reported cases—victims included children and the mentally ill as well as women—increased threefold in the year after the creation of the VPU, and in December 2001 a record 40 percent of all reported crimes involved offenses against women.

A shortage of women officers combined with rapid officer turnover made policing in this area especially difficult, but the UNTAET Office of Communication and Public Information initiated a vigorous campaign about domestic violence using radio, TV, publications, posters, and other forms of communication. Efforts were also made to train print, radio, and TV journalists on gender-sensitive reportage. A three-year, fully funded, multifaceted program to combat domestic violence is underway under the direction of the new government's Office for the Promotion of Equality (formerly the Gender Affairs Unit).

The Gender Affairs Unit operated, via interdepartmental task forces, a network of the thirteen gender focal points assigned to the administrative districts, a UN agency task force, and with the REDE. The district gender focal points, who operated from every district administration office, were especially crucial to effective outreach of the Gender Unit, and they undertook training and other programs.

### **The transition to self-government**

The REDE requested that the election regulations for representatives to the Constitutional Assembly include a quota of 30 percent women. The Electoral Affairs Division of the United Nations rejected the request as not in accordance with UN standards for "free and fair" elections. As a response to this, however, UNTAET did put a number of affirmative action programs in place to promote women's participation in the elections. The SRSG, Sergio Vieira de Mello, urged political parties to nominate women for winnable slots and to incorporate women's issues in party platforms; he even suggested that extra broadcast time would be available if it was used for women candidates. Vieira de Mello also supported political skills training for women candidates and independent electoral commission efforts to bring women in not just as candidates and voters but also as election supervisors. Educational efforts were vigorous; still, women were scarce on voter registration and polling teams, partly because of educational criteria and women's lower rate of literacy.

As a result, 27 percent of those elected to the Constituent Assembly were women. Women were then appointed to two of eleven ministries, Justice and Finance, and two women advisors were appointed to the chief minister, one for human rights and one for the promotion of equality. The advisor for the promotion of equality is Maria Domingas Fernandes, a longtime activist for women's rights and director of the First Women's Congress. Hers is the first office of this kind to be established under a UN peacekeeping mandate.

The constitutional commissions charged with preparing a new constitution were ultimately made up of 40 percent women. Separately women's groups organized and prepared a Women's Charter of Rights, which quickly garnered ten thousand signatures. The charter was written by East Timorese women representing different districts and organizations and was submitted to the Constitutional Assembly upon its election. Due to rising public consciousness around gender equality and nondiscrimination, the resulting Constitution of East Timor, ratified in March 2002, has among the fundamental objectives of the state "to promote and guarantee the effective equality of opportunities between women and men." Nondiscrimination on grounds of gender is a fundamental principle, and equality between women and men is included. The constitution provides that "women and men shall have the same rights and duties in all areas of family life and political, economic, social, cultural life." It also states that "marriage shall be based upon free consent by the parties and on terms of full equality of rights between spouses, in accordance with the law."



## Conclusion

This is a highly abbreviated report. The peacekeeping mission's top leadership greatly assisted the work of UNTAET in its efforts to fulfill UN gender equality policies. It achieved 27 percent representation of women in the first elected legislature and helped create a position reporting directly to the prime minister that focuses on equality for men and for women. As a first effort by a peacekeeping mission to implement Resolution 1325 and to have successfully translated a UN Gender Unit, designed to give voice to women and their concerns, into a mechanism in the new government, UNTAET may serve as a model for future missions. It also merits the kind of systematic analysis that will improve policy making and contribute to improved theory and future implementation.

If peacekeeping operations are to succeed in ensuring a sustainable peace and long-term reconstruction based on democratic principles, rule of law, and United Nations human rights standards, it is essential that the principle of gender equality and nondiscrimination be mainstreamed into all policies and programs. United Nations peacekeeping operations must guarantee that the protection of women's human rights is central to all actions that promote peace, implement peace agreements, resolve conflict, and reconstruct war-torn societies.

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## Gender, International Relations, and the Development of Feminist Security Theory

**N**ational security discourses are typically part of the elite world of masculine high politics. Statesmen, diplomats, and the military conduct the business of states, and too often war, imbuing the relations and processes of the society of nation-states with an atmosphere seemingly devoid of women and an interest in issues of concern to women. The academic discipline charged with theorizing this world, international relations (IR), has only recently made a place for feminist analysis, and then only grudgingly. Academic feminism and IR are contemporaries, each developing through the war-torn twentieth century and motivated by some of the same international events, although work in IR often overlooks women's contributions, such as the 1919 International Congress of Women, which ran parallel to Versailles (Grant 1992, 86). While in some respects estranged from the mainstream of IR, feminist and gender scholars have launched an important critique of the core issues of the discipline: war, peace, and the quest to secure the boundaries of the nation-state. In a rapidly changing, post-9/11 world, feminist voices must be heard if the international system is to achieve a more comprehensive security in the face of terror networks, technowar, and mounting civilian casualties.

The term *security* itself has been wrought with ambiguity and has recently taken on the status of an essentially contested concept in the discipline. Within international relations, discussions of international security traditionally revolve around issues of war and peace in an international system of sovereign and self-interested nation-states, with a particular focus on issues of military strategy. In this view, the provision of security is entrusted to the state, with the assumption that states protect and secure the members of the political community from threats emanating from the dangerous, foreign realm outside state boundaries. However, feminists and other critical scholars have started to inquire into the meaning of this

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concept by asking just who is being secured by security policies? Against the illusion of total security, feminists contest the possibility of a perfectly controlled, coherent security policy that could handle every international contingency. Security for women struggling with everyday patriarchy, as Christine Sylvester observes, "is always partial . . . elusive and mundane" (1994, 183).

In this essay, I survey the relatively new but promising IR feminist literature on international security, highlighting the functions of feminist scholarship in any disciplinary intervention—the critique of existing theory, the reconceptualization of core concepts, and the expansion of empirical knowledge (Boals 1975; Jaquette 1976). A review of feminist security theory scholarship (FST) indicates important successes in another task of feminist analysis—rendering the familiar strange, in this case by problematizing the naturalness of "security" (Harding 1991, 142, 149; cited in Tickner 2001). Through a dialogue fostered with political theorists, peace activists, and policy makers, FST has subverted, expanded, and enriched notions of security for more than a decade by making at least four theoretical moves.<sup>1</sup> First, IR feminists question the supposed nonexistence and irrelevance of women in international security politics, engendering or exposing the workings of gender and power in international relations. This entails the recovery of women's experiences, the recognition of gender-based exclusion from decision-making roles, and the investigation of women's invisibility in international theory. Second, FST questions the extent to which women are secured by state "protection" in times of war and peace. Third, FST contests discourses wherein women are linked unreflectively with peace, arguing that the identification of women with peace be balanced by recognition of the participation, support, and inspiration women have given to war making. Fourth, and more recently, feminists have troubled the assumption that gendered security practices address only women and have started to develop a variegated concept of masculinity to help explain security. I discuss these contributions in three sections, treating theoretical innovations in feminist

<sup>1</sup> Feminists in IR have emphasized a conversational approach (Peterson 1992b, 16) and fostered an "aware cacophony" (Sylvester 1987, 501) of feminist perspectives. Unfortunately, attempts to "open new conversational spaces" between conventional IR theories and the feminist periphery (Peterson 1992d, 184) have not yet dissipated the "gendered estrangement" that inhibits constructive dialogues and public critical engagement between feminist and IR scholars (Tickner 1997, 613). For some recent exchanges between feminists, the mainstream, and other feminists, see Keohane 1989, 1998; Weber 1994; Jones 1996, 1998; Tickner 1997, 1998; Carver, Cochran, and Squires 1998; Marchand 1998; Elsham 2000; Van Crevald 2000.

IR, the conceptual development of the discipline's core issues, and the empirical expansion of IR theory.<sup>2</sup>

### **Critique of existing theory: Challenging "realism"**

With its progenitors among the European émigrés disillusioned with the "idealism" that they assumed to be a cause of World War II, the orthodox approach to IR known as "realism" developed in Anglo-American academic and policy circles following the war (Morgenthau [1948] 1967; cf. Tickner 1988). Realists, as the name implies, dedicated themselves to the dispassionate study of international reality, focusing on "what is" in contrast to the utopian visions of "what should be," which they saw typified in doomed schemes such as the League of Nations (Carr [1939] 1964). Privileging the state and the military sector and viewing violence as endemic to the international system, realist prescriptions gained ascendancy in cold war U.S. academic and governmental discourses of strategy and security. Because realists saw conflict as inevitable in anarchy (an international environment unsanctioned by any higher authority), "security" entailed the pursuit of power conducted by statesmen strictly guided by considerations of national interest and unimpeded by moral deliberations. During the 1970s, academic realism transformed itself into "neorealism." Inspired by the scientific successes of microeconomics, neorealists overcame their preoccupation with great statesmen and diplomats and positioned their work squarely under the rubric of U.S. social science. Settling on the systemic level of analysis, which discounted domestic politics, neorealists applied their analysis and science of deterrence to the "bipolar" structure of an international system divided between two transcendental superpowers (Waltz 1979).

With the end of the cold war, a window of critical opportunity opened as issues of the environment and substate ethno-political violence suddenly became more salient. Growing awareness of the limits of neorealism, the dissolution of the Soviet bloc, the uniting of Europe, and the new relevance of ecological and economic threats prompted some scholars to reevaluate "what (or who) is to be secured, from what threats, and by what means" (Krause and Williams 1996, 230; cf. Crawford 1991; see also Campbell 1992). Some scholars gradually broadened security to encompass economic,

<sup>2</sup> While international security is the focus of this review, feminists continue to make important contributions in other IR issue areas, e.g., international political economy (Marchand and Runyan 2000) and international organization (Meyer and Prugl 1999). For overviews that trace the development of feminist IR theory, see Murphy 1996; Tickner 2001; True 2001.

environmental, and social sectors (Buzan 1991), while others promoted an emancipatory vision of security, linking it with the releasing of individuals from the constraints not only of war but also of poverty, meager education, and political oppression (Booth 1991). Feminist incursions into the field of IR security can be usefully situated on the widening side of the "widening" versus "narrowing" debate: the former argues that the scope of the neorealist concept of security needs to be expanded to address a range of threats, utilize a broader spectrum of methodologies, and address mounting ethical concerns (Kolodziej 1992); the latter argues that a move beyond the study of military force would deal a serious blow to the field's intellectual coherence while distracting from serious threats (Walt 1991). Critical security discourse has generally invoked, but not engaged, feminist scholarship, and even approaches that imagined societal sectors of security (Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde 1998) have yet to take gender seriously (Hansen 2000).<sup>8</sup>

Feminists in IR argue that realism, dominated by elite, white, male practitioners, is a patriarchal discourse that renders women invisible from the high politics of IR even as it depends on women's subjugation as a "domesticated" figure whose 'feminine' sensibilities are both at odds with and inconsequential to the harsh 'realities' of the public world of men and states" (Runyan and Peterson 1991, 68–69). Feminists in IR explain the exclusion of women from foreign policy decision making by pointing to the "extent to which international politics is such a thoroughly masculinized sphere of activity that women's voices are considered inauthentic" (Tickner 1992, 4). Women's traditional exclusion from the military and continuing lack of access to political power at times presents women with a "catch-22" situation. For example, the importance of a candidate's military service as a qualification for government office in U.S. political campaigns puts women, who cannot appeal to this experience, at a disadvantage in obtaining the elite status of national office and thus the ability to affect defense and security policies (Tobias 1990; cf. Elshtain 2000, 445).

However, the FST critique is not limited to strategies for getting more women access to corridors of power; feminists also direct our attention to the gendered structure of IR theory. As the title of a classic IR text indicates, the study of international politics has been concerned first and foremost with *Man, the State, and War* (Waltz 1959). In this book, neorealist Kenneth

<sup>8</sup> It is notable that two of the most prominent academic volumes treating the challenges to traditional security theory from the vantage point of the mid-1990s did not include any contributions from gender analysts (Katzenstein 1996; Krause and Williams 1997).

Waltz turns to the canons of political philosophy for an explanation of the causes of war by asking whether wars are caused by human nature, by the internal structure of states, or by the international system. An important component of the study of IR is a self-positioning in the tradition of Western political theory—tracing an intellectual lineage to Machiavelli and Hobbes—particularly as it concerns the state. Feminist analysis of this pedigree shows that the feminine has long served as a symbolic threat to militarized Western conceptualizations of political community, from the ancient Greeks to the twentieth century; Aeschylus's Furies and Machiavelli's Fortuna are but two examples (Harstock 1983). Rebecca Grant (1991) argues that a gender bias in IR, transmitted unproblematically from Western political thought to the study of IR, results in the question of gender being taken as irrelevant. For Grant, IR's interpretation of Hobbes allows "no room for the question of how gender relations affect the transition out of the brutish state of nature and into society," while Jean-Jacques Rousseau's famous stag hunt, often invoked as a parable of the problems of security, ignores the familial relations that control the hunter's defection from the hunting circle (10–15). Taking men as the sole political actors and citizens, the political theory borrowed by IR postulates a domestic/international divide premised on the private/public distinction that relegates women to a space outside politics (9).

Jean Bethke Elshtain's rich blend of political theory, personal narrative, and history, *Women and War* ([1987] 1995), serves as a rejoinder to the discipline's philosophical conceit and issues a key challenge to the domestic/international divide that Grant identifies. In a sweeping survey of the discourse of war from the Greeks onward, Elshtain details women's complex relationships to the body politic, and thus to war, as they emerge from the narratives (war stories) that are constitutive of war. Elshtain focuses on the ways in which war's "productive destructiveness" inscribes and reinscribes men's and women's identities and thus the boundaries of community: "War creates *the* people. War produces power, individual and collective" (166–67). Reacting to what she sees as the onset of scientism and hyperrationality in academic IR, Elshtain critiques the retreat into abstraction that the quest for scientific certainty produced in "professionalized" war discourse and attempts to revive the bond between politics and morality broken by Machiavelli. By reifying state behavior, Elshtain argues, the realist narrative ignores human agency and identity: "No children are ever born, and nobody ever dies, in this constructed world. There are states, and they are what is" (91).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> One criticism of Elshtain rightly spots her U.S.-centric "myopia" but maintains that

Sensitive to the importance of language and narrative in matters of security, Elshtain critiques what she calls the "strategic voice," an authoritative discourse that is "cool, objective, scientific, and overwhelmingly male" ([1987] 1995, 245). According to Elshtain, this realm of expert language, with its talk of "peacekeeping" missiles and village "pacification," separates ordinary citizens from civic life. Drawing on fieldwork initiated at a summer program for nuclear strategists during the last decade of the cold war, Carol Cohn's (1987) analysis of the "technostrategic" discourse of nuclear defense intellectuals casts a feminist eye on the thinking that shapes the practices of national security. Using an ethnographic, participant-observer strategy, Cohn shows how the planners' use of gendered euphemisms, exemplified by the talk of nuclear virginity and the association of disarmament with emasculation, contributed to a willful, discursive denial of the strategists' accountability to "reality"—the potential cost of strategic decisions in terms of human life (1987, 1990). While denial of the horrors of nuclear war may be an occupational hazard of nuclear planning, to achieve success (in terms of professional standing and collegial status) participants must legitimate their positions by assuming the masculine—that is, tough, rational, logical—position in the gendered security discourse. The masculine position is also available to (and must be taken by) women who want to be taken seriously, while they limit their "feminine" contributions for the sake of legitimacy (1993, 238). Cohn thus shows how both men and women are implicated in, constituted through, and positioned by gendered security discourse. Realizing that merely adding women to the profession will not eliminate the degradation of "feminine" ideas, Cohn suggests that the task ahead is a revaluation of gender discourse (1993).

Elshtain's and Cohn's recognition of the importance of gendered language is an example of the key FST theme of the everyday politics of security. With skillfully crafted vignettes, Cynthia Enloe's *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases* (1989) amplifies this theme, providing an important blueprint for FST and its revisioning of security. By finding gender in national security issues both traditional (military bases and diplomacy) and innovatively ordinary (sex tourism and women's peace movements), Enloe contests the restriction of security to "high politics" alone. As Marysia Zalewski (1994) has noted, Enloe's ontological project locates women's

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Elshtain "does not see peacetime politics as part of war dynamics" (Sylvester 2002, 27). Since the focus of Elshtain's work is the discursive construction of war/peace through war narratives, her dichotomous view may be a reflection of the narrative under consideration, but she clearly sees war as co-constitutive of peace and warns against the absolutizing of peace (1990, 258). A more trenchant line of criticism identifies the tension between Elshtain's faith in the autonomy of discourse and her voluntaristic idea of political critique (Edkins and Pin-Fat 1997, 311–12).

ordinary lives in the international political continuum, while her epistemological curiosity leads her to pose questions such as "where are the women?" that challenge the taken-for-granted irrelevance of women in world affairs. By attending to the experiences of prostitutes, flight attendants, chambermaids, and diplomatic wives, Enloe demonstrates the ordinary workings of gendered power as it supports the practices that constitute international relations. For example, Enloe shows that military bases in foreign countries can lose their "protective cover" in the communities they are installed in if relations with the native population sour. This means that states pay more attention to base women, brothels, and the dating habits of their soldiers than is publicly understood. Likewise, diplomats and the foreign service rely on the hospitality of the domestic space, and their wives' entertaining talents, to create the trust and confidence necessary for the international relations of negotiation. In one study, building on Enloe's work, Katharine Moon (1997) details how the United States and South Korea became "partners in prostitution" through the sponsoring and regulation of a systematic, regulated sex trade surrounding U.S. military camp towns. Moon shows how sexual politics and state security alliance politics intertwined in the 1970s when the dependent Korean government tightened its control of prostitution in an effort to persuade the United States to maintain its regional presence as a guarantor of Korean security.

### **Reconceptualizing core concepts: Security**

Elshtain's and Enloe's works are widely seen as having cleared the ground for the feminist critique of IR, raising the profile of gender-sensitive critiques of security politics. Feminist security theory emerged from a cross-ideological, trans-epistemological, multivoiced conversational debate among multiple feminisms, including liberal, empiricist, modified-standpoint, and qualified postmodern perspectives, among others. While not addressing an IR audience specifically, the publication of feminist work on issues of war and the military, especially *Women, Militarism, and War*, edited by Elshtain and Sheila Tobias (1990), and *Women and Men's Wars*, edited by Judith Stiehm (1983b), also promoted the later formation of feminist IR in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Along with Ann Tickner's *Gender in International Relations* (1992), two edited volumes culled from landmark conferences, Spike Peterson's *Gendered States* (1992a) and Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland's *Gender and International Relations* (1991), collected important essays on security topics. By the mid-1990s, a number of single-authored surveys of fem-



inist IR, including Jan Jindy Pettman's *Worlding Women* (1996) and Sylvester's *Feminist Theory and International Relations in a Postmodern Era* (1994), featured full treatments of security issues (see also Steans 1998; Peterson and Runyan 1999).

Tickner's book in particular presents an early feminist critique of the realist tradition and the first step to evaluating prevalent notions of security from a gender-sensitive perspective. With its military focus, IR security studies had become, according to Tickner, a "dysfunctional" response to the challenges of human and environmental security. As Tickner explains, realism stresses rationality, strength, power, autonomy, and independence, qualities as associated with foreign policy and military affairs as they are with masculinity (1992, 3). She problematizes as well the exogeneity of domestic affairs in the realist account and shows how ostensibly objective realist national security studies attempt to explain the causes of war through a discourse that privileges a view based on hegemonic masculinity. While realists take power as the coercive means by which states obtain security at the expense of other states, Tickner suggests instead that an ethos of "mutual enablement rather than domination" could underlie a positive-sum notion of security inspired by peace activism (1992, 65). Like Elshtain, Tickner challenges the realist aversion to morality in IR, questioning the adaptation of a set of public (and thus international) values as a basis for security so wildly at odds with the values we "espouse at home" (1992, 138).

Applying gender as a category of analysis to show the possibility of a more comprehensive notion of security, Tickner traces the linkage between the system of international relations (and its theorization) and multileveled, gendered insecurities. Against realism's assumption of autonomous states and its prescription of self-help in a hostile anarchical environment, Tickner argues that the threats of the nuclear age, cross-border environmental degradation, and evidence of increasing international cooperation demand that interdependence be taken seriously (1992). For Tickner, the assumption that there is order within and anarchy beyond the bounds of the community effects a divide between international and domestic politics that mirrors the public-private split that feminist theorists argue perpetuates domestic violence. Tickner rejects the analytic separation of explanations for war into distinct levels and the identification of security with state borders, arguing that violence at the international, national, and family levels is interrelated, ironically taking place in domestic and international spaces beyond the reaches of law (1992, 58, 193). Feminists in IR find the levels-of-analysis approach particularly inappropriate to their concerns because the problem

of the system of patriarchy cannot be addressed solely by reference to particular actors, whether they are men or states (Brown 1988, 473).

### **Recasting the state**

Like Tickner, many IR feminists problematize the state and raise questions as to its status as protector of women. Peterson argues that, in addition to its relegation of sexual violence and its threat to the private domestic realm, the state is implicated in the ways that women become "the objects of masculinist social control not only through direct violence (murder, rape, battering, incest), but also through ideological constructs, such as 'women's work' and the cult of motherhood, that justify structural violence—inadequate health care, sexual harassment, and sex-segregated wages, rights and resources" (1992c, 46). However, while not denying the possibility of limited protection offered by the state (Harrington 1992), FST contests the notion of protection—"the exchange of obedience/subordination for (promises of) security"—as a justification for state power (Peterson 1992c, 50). Peterson likens the state's provision of security for women to a protection racket, "implicated in the reproduction of hierarchies and in the structural violence against which they claim to offer protection" (1992c, 51). In addition, Stiehlm argues that the state typically denies women the opportunity to be societal "protectors," assigning to them the role of "protected" despite the predatory threat often posed by their ostensible guardians (1983a). Governmental attempts to achieve total security versus an external threat can result in predictable oppression: "The problem is that the potential victim is both more accessible and compliant than the marauder. Because the protector is embarrassed and frustrated by his failure to protect, he restricts his protectee instead" (373). By circumscribing the possibilities of the female deployment of legitimate force, the masculine state effectively denies the development of what Stiehlm calls a "defender" society, one "composed of citizens equally liable to experience violence and equally responsible for exercising society's violence" (367).

### **Reconceptualizing violence**

In *Gender in International Relations*, Tickner introduces an important theme of FST: the recognition of *structural violence*, a term borrowed from peace research (Galtung 1971), which she uses to designate the economic and environmental "insecurity of individuals whose life expect-

tancy was reduced, not by the direct violence of war but by domestic and international structures of political and economic oppression" (Tickner 1992, 69). Peterson claims that a feminist rethinking of security must first inquire into how structural violence comes to be understood as natural and unproblematic and then work to politicize and reveal the historically contingent nature of such structures (1992a, 49). While women have long been peripheral to the decision-making processes of global capital, the international political economy can render women insecure through the gendered division of labor, the discounting of work in the home, the dictates of structural adjustment programs, the ravages of poverty, and the violence of sexual tourism and trafficking in women—all issues that generally do not get the attention of orthodox practitioners of IR (see Pettman 1996). Likewise, although the care of the environment, a transnational issue requiring collective action, is not a priority of IR theories that privilege the power and instrumental rationality of nation-states, Tickner contends that feminist configurations of security must take note of the need for global economic restructuring and urge a shift from the exploitation of nature to the *reproduction* of nature (1992). Such a global restructuring might start with the recognition that environmental degradation is not gender neutral; women are affected disproportionately by environmental insecurity, "especially in developing countries where the link between poverty, women's status (or lack thereof), imposed development policies, and environmental degradation is a complex but intense one" (Elliot 1996, 16).

In sum, the foundation of FST combines a rejection of realism, an interrogation of the abstractions of strategic discourse, an awareness of the connection between women's everyday experience and security, a critique of the state, and the recognition of the effects of structural violence with a strong normative and transformative vision, evidenced by its focus on inequality and emancipation. For Sarah Brown, the goal of all IR theory should be "the identification and explanation of social stratification and of inequality as structured at the level of global relations" (1988, 461). Tickner claims that social and gender justice must be at the heart of any enduring peace; political, economic, and ecological relationships characterized by domination and subordination cannot coexist with authentic security (1992, 129). She further proposes that empathy, mediation, and sensitivity, all devalued as feminine principles, could play an important role in building alternative modalities of human behavior. According to Tickner, a shift away from the citizen-warrior-patriot, an exclusionary civic ideal predicated on certain types of wartime sacrifice, and a questioning of the premium placed

on military success could aid the development of a less militarized version of national identity, one more conducive to relations with foreign others and to the recognition of the validity of male and female experiential contributions (1992, 137).

### **Reimagining peace and war**

Conceptually, FST investigates and problematizes the relationships between women, security and peace, and war. The unreflective conflation of "peace" with "security" is a dubious move, for it "construes difference as threat" (Runyan and Peterson 1991, 86). Peace, as Elshtain has observed, is an "ontologically suspicious concept" as it is inconceivable without war, and binary understandings of war and peace often rely on degraded notions of the feminine and deny the disharmony and disorder of social and political life (1990). Although war is largely a masculine institution—historically men have been its primary planners and prosecutors—feminist scholars have argued that the complex interrelationship between masculinities and war needs careful investigation. Feminists note that, though drill sergeants and misogynist training are employed in the attempt to turn men into warriors, this conditioning does not convince the majority of men to fire their weapons in battle (Elshtain [1987] 1995, 207; Tickner 2001, 57). For sure, beliefs in the masculinity of war and the inherent aggressiveness of men are undermined by contemporary warfare, which "seems to require, as much as physical aggression, a tolerance of boredom or the ability to operate a computer under stress, characteristics that are neither distinctly 'masculine' nor heroic" (Ruddick 1989, 151–52).

Mary Burguières usefully identifies three possible feminist approaches to peace: a position that accepts stereotypes about male bellicosity and the pacific female nature and espouses the potential peaceful benefits of maternal thinking; one that rejects notions of gender difference and female nonviolence as disempowering to women and emphasizes women's right to equal standing on issues of war and peace; and a stance that attacks militarism by rejecting both stereotypes, arguing that "war is rooted in patriarchal, military structures which are supported by the behavior of both men and women" (1990, 9). Sara Ruddick argues that feminist politics is consonant with the practice of peacemaking and indeed can catalyze a latent peacefulness in maternal practices focusing on the protection and nurturing of children (1989). However, considering Betty Reardon's (1985) suggestion that feminist and peace research projects be

merged, Sylvester (1987) warns that such a merger may obscure the diversity of women's different relationships with peace seen, for example, between the mother and the woman warrior.

Feminist security theory recognizes the ways that women, though they are absent from our war stories, are implicated in war-making practices. With questions such as "without women's activities, would wars be possible?" feminists remind us that women have played a part in the story of human warfare other than "waiting and weeping" (Pettman 1996, 127). To explain the absence of women in our war stories, Elshtain presents two archetypes, "Just Warriors"—"man construed as violent, whether eagerly and inevitably or reluctantly and tragically"—and "Beautiful Souls"—"woman as nonviolent, offering succor and compassion"—that work to fix men as combatants and locate women as noncombatants while failing to represent pacific men or violent women throughout history ([1987] 1995, 4). Elshtain spotlights the "Ferocious Few," presenting narratives of the woman warriors, Spartan mothers, vengeful settlers, and female revolutionaries whose violence and battle stories undermine common expectations of the women/war nexus. If we want to understand why female violence is seen as an anomaly to be read out of the history of war, Elshtain suggests that we look to the marginalization of women as juridically constituted and politically accountable subjects in the West, a position that leaves women in a realm coded "potentially uncontrollable . . . overpersonalized and vindictive" ([1987] 1995, 169). By contrast, "male violence could be *moralized* as a structured activity—war—and thus be depersonalized and idealized" (169).

### **Expanding empirical knowledge: Peace/war/masculinity**

Building on this conceptual framework, FST highlights women's wartime roles as victims, protesters, promoters, and participants. In contrast to realists, who focus on the causes of war, many feminists emphasize the effects and consequences of war on civilians, who have constituted an increasingly large proportion of casualties throughout the twentieth century (Tickner 1997, 625). Expanding the subject matter of IR to wartime sexual violence, FST attempts to uncover the political and symbolic nature of a phenomenon assumed to be natural and private.

### **Investigating sexual violence**

As Susan Brownmiller has made clear (1975, esp. chap. 3) rape in warfare has a long history: documented in the religious wars of the Crusades, the American Revolutionary War, the German invasion of Belgium in World

War I, it was also used by the Germans, Russians, Americans, and Japanese in WWII; the Americans in Vietnam; and the Pakistanis in Bangladesh in the 1970s. Sexual violence in the context of the conflict in former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s and the 1994 Rwandan genocide demonstrates that this is not a problem of another era but one that war historians and IR theorists have neglected. Inger Skjelsbæk argues that wartime rape must be seen both as a form of sexual violence (which also includes sexual slavery, prostitution, forced marriages, and genital mutilation) and along a continuum of torture and killings used to achieve political goals (2001; see also Seifert 1994). Mass rapes and sexual violence against women (and men) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the incidences, reportedly numbering between twenty thousand and thirty-five thousand, have drawn particular attention for their reports of Serbian sexual terrorism, which strategically employed forced pregnancies in concert with ethnic cleansing policies.<sup>5</sup> Women are normally among the most powerless members of a given society, and their role as reproducers and transmitters of culture leaves them particularly susceptible to sexual violence during international conflict, while cultural expectations often leave victims ostracized by their own communities afterward.

The issue of rape forces feminist security theorists to ask tough questions about the war/peace dichotomy, questioning whether peacetime provides peace for women. Perpetrators of violence against women often stay close, continuing to threaten women in the post-civil-war or post-state-terror rebuilding process (Pettman 1996, 105). However, war-related violence should not obscure women's everyday insecurity under global systems of patriarchy. Examining Pakistani honor killings and the societal threats of retribution that often silence women who voice their insecurity, Lene Hansen argues that debate as to whether security "happens" at the individual or collective level is misplaced; in their national, religious, political, and cultural contexts, practices such as honor killings and rape effectively transfer insecurity to the individual, thus privatizing and depoliticizing gender insecurity (2000).

### ***Participation in peace and war***

While peacetime does not always bring security, women have traditionally played important roles in international peace movements. At the International Conference on Women at the Hague in 1915 on the eve of World War I, the spirit of female internationalism resulted in calls for the rejection of war, refutation of the idea that war was waged for the benefit of women, and resistance to the role mothers were asked to play in breeding "cannon

<sup>5</sup> Pettman 1996, 101, see also Stiglmayer 1994; Allen 1996; Hansen 2001

fodder" (Costin 1983, 154; see also Berkman 1990 and Tickner 1992). Tickner traces, through peace conferences such as the 1985 Women's International Peace Conference in Canada and the 1985 World Conference to Review and Appraise the Achievements of the United Nations Decade for Women in Nairobi, the development of a realistic (but not realist) feminist perspective on security, one grounded in immediate threats to women's survival and based not only on the absence of war but also on the securing of social and economic justice (1992, 55). With increasing participation in United Nations-sponsored peacekeeping missions, some point to the benefits of certain skills of female peacekeepers in establishing rapport with local civilians, preventing female weapons smugglers through more effective searches, and lowering levels of harassment and violence against civilians (Olsson and Tryggstad 2001).

Feminists in IR have drawn particular lessons from the 1981 Greenham Common Women's Peace Camp—a protest against the installation of U.S. cruise missiles in the United Kingdom—to demonstrate feminist strategies of resistance against state security practices. These protestors, by evading and breaching the security of the base itself, tracking and documenting the movement of weapons officials claimed were unobtrusively placed, dancing on missile silos, and using innovative legal strategies such as arguing that the deployment constituted genocide, demonstrated a novel subversion of orthodox notions of security (Sylvester 1994, 184). As Enloe writes, "a military base easily penetrated by a group of non-violent women was no longer a military base" (1989, 79).

Feminists who focus on debates surrounding women's increased participation in war and their lives in the military as soldiers (Stiehm 1989) face the challenge of explaining women's recent inclusion in the discourse of war. Some feminists argue that men's absolute control of the legitimate use of force must be resisted if women are to achieve equal citizenship, and they maintain that the influx of women promises to change the ideological makeup of the military while mitigating the effects of masculine honor on the duty of soldiering (Stiehm 2000). Grant sees a tension between the feminist epistemological commitment to base theory on women's experiences and the increasing correspondence between men's and women's experiences in military and combat situations, which may potentially lead to compromised feminist claims from the margins (Grant 1992).

However, women's participation—in the military and high politics—continues to be seen as a security risk in the discourses of international relations. Women are often seen as "nationalist wombs" too valuable as reproducers to be wasted in combat (Pettman 1996, 145). Popular

reservations over women serving in positions important to foreign policy are a fact of U.S. security politics, as evidenced by the media coverage and popular reaction to Patricia Schroeder's display of emotion upon her 1987 withdrawal from the U.S. presidential primary race (Tickner 1992, 2–3). Among military men, unit cohesion and physical fitness are most often used as examples of the detrimental effects of women's presence in the military, but gender analysis undermines these arguments. Joshua Goldstein finds evidence to suggest that the celebrated phenomenon of male bonding is "generic bonding in an all-male setting, and is accessible to women in mixed-gender settings" (2001, 407). Examining the widespread male apprehension within the military to gender-normed physical training (PT) "standards" for women, Carol Cohn finds that this opposition is a symbolic stand-in for hostility toward women in the military that can no longer be expressed openly (2000). It seems that militarized masculinities, like lizards in nature, communicate by doing push-ups.

Recently, one prominent U.S. observer of foreign affairs has argued that both the pacific nature of women and their increasing political participation and influence on decision making in the developed world will lead to a more cooperative and less conflictual international relations—a "feminized" world politics. However, he argues that such a "matriarchal" world politics must be resisted by developed democracies, as they are vulnerable while threatened by authoritarian rogue states directed by "young, ambitious, unconstrained men" because in "anything but a totally feminized world, feminized policies could be a liability" (Fukuyama 1998, 36). Tickner has contested this view, arguing that its association of women with peace, highly contested within feminism, along with its conservative realist assumptions, justify the exclusion of women from international politics and distract from the IR feminist agenda of recognizing the "need for diminishing socially constructed gender hierarchies that result in the devaluation of women's lives and their economic and social contributions to society" (1999, 9).<sup>6</sup>

### ***Masculinity and militarization***

Since Enloe's claim that "making women invisible hides the workings of both femininity and masculinity in international politics" (1989, 11), masculinity has been a key, though until recently understudied, theme in FST (Zalewski and Parpart 1998; Hooper 2001). Arguing in favor of granting female agency rather than succumbing to the perception of women as "victims or problems" (1992, 142), Tickner's critique draws on the work

<sup>6</sup> See also Ehrenreich et al. 1999; Ling 2000.



of Robert Connell to focus on "hegemonic masculinities," not essentialized men, and she recommends that we take inspiration from feminine characteristics rather than holding them as markers of female moral superiority (Tickner 1992, 137). For Connell, these "configurations of gender practice" represent "the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy" and thus are a mutable, "historically mobile relation" (1995, 77). As Charlotte Hooper has observed, taking into account the male dominance of the field, IR "seems a particularly appropriate site for an investigation into masculinities, and particularly into their dominant, or 'hegemonic,' forms" (2001, 5). To this end, Craig Murphy (1998) catalogs several different types of masculinity in international politics: the good soldier, the civilian strategist, the military son, the good comrade, the fashionable pacifist, and the Sisyphean peacemaker. For Murphy, these hierarchically ordered but interacting subordinate masculine roles support the dominant "good soldier" role that in turn buttresses the inequitable world social order.

Applied to IR, the study of masculinities offers insights into the practices that sustain security. Connell argues that relationships between different masculine types are the basis for military organization: "physically violent but subordinate to orders on the one hand, dominating and organizationally competent on the other" (1985, 9). The U.S. military in the 1940s developed technological advances in nuclear weapons and logistics that increased the importance of a certain masculinity—"the professionalized, calculative rationality of the technical specialist" (Connell 1985, 9). Originally understood as feminine due to the "sedentary" nature of "keyboard work," information technology has taken on a meaning with more power for middle-class men as a result of personal computer marketing campaigns and violent games (Connell 1995, 55–56). According to Steve Niva, the 1991 Gulf War gave rise to a new iteration of hegemonic military masculinity, "tough and highly militarized but also sensitive and compassionate," counterposed to the type of masculinity represented by Saddam Hussein (1998, 119). Niva notes that media coverage of this newly hegemonic masculinity focused on "computer programmers, missile technologists, battle-tank commanders, high-tech pilots, and those appropriately equipped and educated for new world order warfare" at the expense of grunts and foot soldiers, thereby accentuating the American technological and societal superiority (119). The U.S. "military's new 'technowar' paradigm for capital-intensive, high-technology warfare highlighted the differences between economics and political systems and, thus, the superiority of Western men over other men" (119). Enloe asks whether UN peacekeeping forces evoke different, less militaristic masculinities than

those who soldier for the nation-state (1993). In terms of structural violence, Connell sees a threat in the rising hegemony of a "transnational business masculinity" exemplified by globally operating business executives and their network of political and military contacts (2000, 26).

The study of IR masculinities is accompanied, as Zalewski notes, by the danger that a concentration on gender "could all too easily focus on men or masculinity and create the belief that all are equally oppressed and disadvantaged by gender" and "make invisible the actual practices of domination" to the detriment of feminist politics (1994, 409). However, the alternative, to take masculinity as undifferentiated and unproblematic and to continue to see the oppressive position of masculinity as inevitable and immutable, makes continued research in this direction seem worth the risk.

### Conclusion

Feminists working on security issues have articulated a normative "revision" of what security could mean if gender were to be taken seriously. Feminist security theory interrogates the philosophical, academic, and political underpinnings of gendered insecurity and articulates an alternative vision of security. This vision entails revealing gendered hierarchies, eradicating patriarchal structural violence, and working toward the eventual achievement of common security. In its critique of existing theory, FST takes on realism, revealing its philosophically transmuted gender bias and androcentric framework. Reconceptualizing core concepts of IR, FST expands and contests realist notions of security and demonstrates why impoverished assumptions of autonomy and overly parsimonious levels-of-analysis approaches must be abandoned for a vision of an interconnected, interdependent international system. Feminist investigations of the gendered peace/war nexus have resulted in the expansion of empirical knowledge, contributing to a fuller account of women peace workers, women warriors, wartime sexual violence, and militarized masculinities. Recent international developments suggest several more unexplored avenues for future FST research.

Feminists in IR have not given adequate attention to military hardware and weaponry and have left the relationships among war, gender, and technology understudied (with the exceptions of Tobias et al. 1982; Hooper 2001). The "revolution in military affairs" and the prominence of artificial intelligence in military planning are in need of feminist intervention (see Adam 1998; Halberstam 2001). Elshtain draws attention to the paradoxical U.S. military policy of "combatant immunity," the consolidation of a new

norm of "riskless warfare" that combines an extremely low tolerance for U.S. casualties with aerial bombing campaigns that punish foreign non-combatants (especially women and children) (2000, 447). As technoscience and battlefield automation continue to influence the practice of war and as the abilities and physical presence of the warrior are alternatively enhanced or removed altogether, the inconsistency Elshtain identifies is likely to remain a challenging issue for feminist security theory. Bringing feminist critiques of science and war to bear on the study of technoscientific state violence could improve our understandings of the discourse of "networked warfare" as well as the "smart bombs" that will torment civilian populations for the foreseeable future. The use of networks and cellular phones by terrorists during the September 11, 2001, attacks serves notice that information technology-enabled networks are now as much a part of women's and men's insecurity as they are of the securitizing efforts of nation states.

As state managers in the West and elsewhere struggle to capture and contain the diffuse threat of terrorism using the tools of statecraft, FST must work to recover the experiences of women after September 11, not only as (he)roes but in their multiple roles across levels and borders. As the more "private," domestic element of the September 11 phenomenon, the anthrax attacks from within the United States on the postal system and its everyday recipients have gone without official blame, explanation, or sustained media coverage, yet they affected the lives of anyone who opens a mailbox daily. The war in Afghanistan demonstrated both gender's power to legitimate national security goals and the easy acceptance of remasculinization during times of war (Tickner 2002). The vital, often gendered, negotiation of cultural relations between the West and Islam and the effects of state antiterror campaigns on civilians are problems that military campaigns in Afghanistan or Iraq are not designed to address and traditional nonfeminist theories of IR are not entirely equipped to handle. The U.S.-led global war on terror seems to exemplify the type of gendered, multilevel insecurity that IR feminists have raised to our critical attention.

Ironically, the policy world of nation-states has recently begun to outpace the academic discipline of IR in its acceptance of feminist issues, as evidenced by the rapid diffusion of "gender mainstreaming" bureaucracies and gender-sensitive policies across states from a diverse range of cultures and levels of gender inequality (True and Mintrom 2001, 29). The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 in October of 2000 was a watershed that should provide those interested in gender and security with many new research opportunities to study the ways the incorporation of a gender perspective and female participation affect peacekeeping and the

security of women and men.<sup>7</sup> With its multileveled, ethical approach, feminist security theory offers the best hope that these challenges—technowar, the “war on terror,” and peacekeeping—can be met with an eye toward the reduction of gendered global insecurities in the difficult years ahead.

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<sup>7</sup> Resolution 1325 recognizes the role of women in peace building and the prevention and resolution of conflicts and calls for study of the impact of conflict on women and girls. It marks the first time the United Nations has taken formal action on gender issues. For discussion, see Olsson and Tryggstad 2001.

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## Book Reviews

*Global Democracy, Social Movements, and Feminism.* By Catherine Eschle. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2001.

*Gender and Social Movements.* By M. Bahati Kuumba. Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 2001.

*Feminism and Antiracism: International Struggles for Justice.* Edited by France Winddance Twine and Kathleen M. Blee. New York and London: New York University Press, 2001.

**Karen Garner, Florida International University**

**W**hat is the relationship among feminism, antiracism, and democracy? This broad question is at the core of Catherine Eschle's analysis of various theoretical frames, M. Bahati Kuumba's "gender lens" focus on racial equality movements in the United States and South Africa, and France Winddance Twine and Kathleen Blee's edited collection of sixteen ethnographies of feminist movements. Working in different ways, each of these studies seeks to relate global and transnational forces to national and local actions. The authors share a goal: to break down antidemocratic hierarchies within social movements so that those movements can transform existing political institutions and achieve progressive social change in an increasingly globalized world.

In *Global Democracy, Social Movements, and Feminism*, Catherine Eschle, lecturer in politics at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, systematically critiques democratic theory within modern traditions (liberalism, Marxism, republicanism, and anarchism), within "new times" theories that have emerged in recent decades ("associative democracy," "radical civil society," "radical democracy," and "politics of difference"), and within Western feminist frameworks ("political reformism," "social reformism," "democratic cultural pluralism," "maternalism," and "feminist republicanism"). None of these theoretical frames, she argues, truly explicates

the multiple locations of power that exist in the "real" world. Nor do they capture the complexity of social movements as sites of democratic struggle and sources of new democratic forms that can effectively challenge "gendered and globalizing power relations that have so far rendered the promise of democracy hollow for many people" (223). Modern theoretical traditions overemphasize the location of power in the state or economy, territorial notions of politics and society, and rational, autonomous political actors. New times theories devote more attention to social movements but misrepresent them as more unitary and less complex than they really are and neglect gender hierarchies as well as the impact of globalization. Second-wave feminist democratic theory inserts women specifically into the "malestream" polity and deconstructs patriarchal power but overrelies on a statist and reformist model of change that is too divorced from feminist movement activism.

To address these theoretical deficiencies, Eschle turns to feminist movement practices, specifically the contributions of "black and third world feminists" who, she asserts, have moved beyond existing democratic and feminist theory and offer new insights into how social and civil life can be made more democratic and inclusive. Eschle acknowledges that black and third-world feminists is a problematic designation. Yet she justifies its utility by arguing that black and third-world feminists share commonalities in structural location and identification. Their shared location and "political kinship" account for a "more accurate, or at least 'less false' picture of power relationships" that those in more privileged social positions cannot understand instinctively. Black and third-world feminists explicate and resist the intersecting operations of many forms of power (patriarchy being only one of these) within culturally and historically specific social contexts (11–12, 124). As a result, they are, Eschle asserts, building "direct theory" through praxis to move toward an "innovative understanding of democracy that is global in scope and genuinely inclusive, and that has social movements at its heart" (15).

Eschle also examines globalization's impact on democratic institutions, social movement activity, and theory. She defines *globalization* as processes and phenomena that increase social relatedness, reconfigure space and time, and intensify consciousness of the world as a whole in the realms of the economy, the state, international relations, and family life, as well as culture, ontology, and epistemology (146–48). In general, globalization has not fostered an expansive, participatory reformulation of democracy. The effects of globalization on democracy building are contradictory (sometimes homogenizing, sometimes polarizing, sometimes coercive, sometimes enabling), which is not surprising because the definition is so

broad. Prodemocracy movements linked to globalizing processes have proliferated, but "liberal democracy in its most elitist, least developmental form" is the most common outcome of struggle (151). Eschle compares attempts to retheorize democracy in the context of globalization ("liberal cosmopolitanism," "global demarchy," "globalized Marxism," "global civil society," and "politics of connection"). These, too, she finds limited in explaining how movement politics construct democracy "on the ground," ignorant of racialized and gendered power relations and conservative in their acceptance of "modernist assumptions about power, politics, agency and change" (177).

In her final chapter, Eschle explores ways that contemporary transnational feminist movements actually could provide a model for participatory, inclusive democracy on a global scale. Transnational feminist movements approach democracy building not as a goal but as an inclusive process, where participants in different, not-yet-equal national, cultural, class, race, and sexual orientation locations constantly negotiate with one another. She asks provocative questions: Do inclusive, democracy-building processes in transnational feminist movements have implications for democracy building in individual states or significance in global politics? Do transnational feminist movements transform state and global politics when they institutionalize and enter the nongovernmental organization (NGO) arena, or are their radical democratic goals co-opted? Eschle does not answer these essential queries. As to whether or not feminist movements should engage with the state system, Eschle comes to a well-reasoned, if cautious, conclusion. Transnational feminist movements should maintain a "skeptical and strategic" approach to the state, engaging in state-led change when useful but also "maintain[ing] links with broader, ultimately transformatory, movement struggles" (215). Finally, she calls for more analysis of all social movements, particularly feminist ones, to reveal how they construct direct theory for greater global democracy in the real world.

M. Bahati Kuumba's *Gender and Social Movements* responds to Eschle's call. Her comparative analysis of civil rights activism in the United States and the antiapartheid struggle in South Africa illuminates undemocratic gender hierarchies within those movements. Kuumba, associate professor of sociology at Spelman College, examines how each movement reproduced the gender inequalities prevalent within the wider social fields in which they developed. These movements, she argues, lend themselves to cross-cultural comparative analysis based on broad similarities in U.S. and South African societies' "system of racial domination, intersected with gender stratification, and active mass movements for racial equality and national liberation" (24).

Kuumba seeks to redress what she sees as the absence of gender analysis in sociological theoretical models that explain social movement emergence, organization, ideology, strategy, and outcomes. She explores racial justice movements in the United States and South Africa as "gendered terrains" at the macrolevel (sociohistorical and structural context), at the mesolevel (organizational structures and collective campaigns), and at the microlevel (key individuals) to reveal the ways that gender roles, ideologies, and power systems affect movement activities and results. While the racial justice movements in both nations can claim "progress" in alleviating racial oppression, Kuumba argues that South African antiapartheid activists achieved more than U.S. civil rights advocates in addressing "strategic" gendered interests and breaking down underlying bases of inequality that sustain the gender subordination of women in their respective societies. These outcomes were in part due to the fact that in South Africa an active Women's League emerged within the African National Congress (ANC). In addition, a separate Women's National Coalition (WNC), including women's organizations from across a broad interracial political spectrum, provided the mechanism for women's organizations to "voice their perspectives and continually infuse the principle of gender equality as integral to the concept of a 'New South Africa'" (129-30). Consequently, when the ANC gained control of the national government in 1994, it established the Commission on Gender Equity, and "the ANC-led government commitment to forging a nonracial democracy has been accompanied by efforts to close the gender gaps" in South Africa, as well (130).

Why haven't black feminists in the United States produced a similar "gender consciousness" within the national civil rights movement? Kuumba suggests that in the 1990s black feminism was only one of "various fragmented segments" of the civil rights movement, along with revolutionary pan-Africanism, cultural nationalism, black marxists, and black gays and lesbians. Moreover, the strong conservative and patriarchal tradition within the movement (illustrated, she notes, by the 1995 Million Man March) asserts that only issues facing black men are issues for the whole black community (134). Kuumba sees, however, "growing tendencies in the movement toward a progressive gender-conscious politics" (135). Like Eschle, she emphasizes democratic possibilities in the "vibrant and dynamic race/class/gender analysis that emerged from . . . Black feminist discourse" that explicates linked systems of oppression. However, in contradistinction to Eschle, Kuumba argues that in the United States this "discourse" remains academic and "has yet to make itself to the 'streets'" (138).

France Winddance Twine and Kathleen M. Blee's edited collection, *Feminism and Antiracism: International Struggles for Justice*, focuses on what is happening in the "streets," in feminist, antiracist social movements around the globe—in Europe, North America, East and South Asia, Australia, the Middle East, and Africa. Latin America is conspicuously absent. Each of its sixteen case studies examines social movements, organizations, or activists dedicated to challenging linked systems of oppression within local and national contexts that have global implications for social justice activists.

The collection is divided into four parts. Part I—"Feminist Spaces, Antiracist Maps"—includes essays on cross-class (in one case cross-caste) and cross-cultural feminist organizing. The essays range from analysis of a women's center in Turin (Heather Merrill), a feminist NGO working through the all-women courts in Delhi (Veronica Magar), union organizing at a women-managed strip club in San Francisco (Siobhan Brooks), to a group of women health-care professionals who extend services to women of non-Arab, African slave ancestry in North Yemen (Delores M. Walters). This section documents sites where feminists challenge social and racial hierarchies relevant to their own larger social contexts. Part II—"Feminist Talk, Antiracist Dialogues"—explores how antiracist dialogues emerged at various locales: a rape crisis center in postapartheid South Africa (Michelle Rosenthal), women's shelters in California (Ellen Kaye Scott), lesbian and queer performance art in Australia (andrea breen), and in contemporary Japanese national debate over the exploitation of Korean "comfort women" during World War II (Yoshiko Nozaki). Part III examines feminist, antiracist "Coalitions at Work": political organizing to free Mumia Abu-Jamal from death row in the United States (Sohera Syeda and Becky Thompson), challenges to "gendered and sexuated" Hindu nationalism in moments of "crisis" that threatened gay and lesbian communities in India (Paola Bacchetta), transnational feminist organizing in Zimbabwe (Carolyn Martin Shaw), and white antiracist and profeminist men's groups in Canada and the United States (Eileen O'Brien and Michael P. Armato). Part IV—"Faith and Other Unfinished Feminisms"—uncovers obstacles to international feminist antiracist organizing. These studies examine ethnocentric responses to Islam in France (Jane Freedman), anti-intellectualism within an interracial "faith-based" coalition to recover the history of a racially motivated massacre in Florida (Cathleen L. Armstead), interaction between caste and gender oppressions in postindependence India (Ashwini Deshpande), and white supremacy and antifeminist patriarchy in broadcast journalism in Canada (Minelle Mahtani).

The editors' organization of these eclectic essays gives this wide-ranging volume added coherence as a record of recent feminist and antiracist initiatives to "build real democratic institutions" (xiii). The appendices—"Chronology of Selected Feminist, Racist, and Antiracist Actions" and "Selected List of Feminist and Antiracist Organizations"—are also helpful in defining historical and global contexts. Moreover, as diverse as these individual essays are, each illuminates global implications of the struggles it documents. This common thread supports the editors' mission "to bridge feminist theorizing and transnational antiracist activism" (2). A concluding essay to synthesize these admirably diverse case studies would have been welcome. However, collectively, this empirical work supports Winddance Twine and Blee's opening declaration: "Only through organized and collective strategies can feminist and antiracist actions, whether in the newsroom, the classroom, courtroom, or strip club, ultimately be effective in an international struggle for justice" (11).

From these three recent books we learn that feminism, antiracism, and democracy are not necessarily linked in theory or in practice, but they should and, more importantly, can be. ■

*Engendering Forced Migration: Theory and Practice.* Edited by Doreen Indra. New York: Berghahn Books, 1999.

*War's Offensive on Women: The Humanitarian Challenge in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan.* By Julie A. Mertus. Bloomfield, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 2000.

*Women and Civil War: Impact, Organizations, and Action.* Edited by Krishna Kumar. Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2001.

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**S**ince the end of the cold war, the body of research on the gendered impact of armed conflict has grown rapidly, particularly in terms of the impact of intrastate wars on women and their dependents. This development has come from authors in international relations, politics, peace studies, and women's studies too familiar to need listing, but it is being supplemented by a wide range of international humanitarian organizations, development agencies, and advocacy and campaigning bod-

ies.<sup>1</sup> It is very positive that the issue of armed violence's gendered impact (including on men and boys) has come to the fore. However, the very rapidity of this expansion also raises some problematic issues. When feminist scholars and activists encounter accounts of wars that appear to have just "discovered" the phenomenon of violence against women and girls, including sexual violence, we must be prepared to ask some questions. It is sometimes the case that the simple exercise of checking the bibliography reveals that the authors-editors are not aware of decades of feminist research and campaigning on violence against women as an everyday feature of gender relations. These three volumes are each a timely contribution to our field of knowledge and, at the same time, provide an example of the variability of analytical levels of engagement with the theoretical, epistemological, and methodological challenges.

Before assessing this engagement, it is necessary to distinguish the works' chronology and provenance. The impetus for Doreen Indra's collection was the Fifth International Research and Advisory Panel Conference on Forced Migration in 1996, and the collection is published under the auspices of the Refugee Studies Programme; Julie Mertus's work is a commissioned study that forms part of a series undertaken by the United States-based Humanitarianism and War Project; and Krishna Kumar's collection was similarly commissioned as part of a United States Agency for International Development (USAID) series on the rebuilding of societies after civil war. The latter two works therefore represent examples of the growing body of publications that originate as "gray" literature, produced in a specific format (usually relatively short and with use of "snapshot" boxed illustrative material).<sup>2</sup> By comparison, at 400-odd pages and nineteen chapters, *Engendering Forced Migration* is a standard academic text. The chronological parameters are also distinct. Mertus's material focuses on women's experiences of armed conflict during the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and its aftermath, and under the Taliban regime up to 1999, and relates these to the humanitarian challenges of the closing years of that decade. Her parameters are therefore quite focused, while Kumar's are much broader. Kumar states that his research project was deliberately designed to encompass widely diverse intercontinental case studies of societies affected by civil or internal war. The outcome incorporates case studies on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cambodia, El Salvador, Georgia,

<sup>1</sup> See, e.g., International Committee of the Red Cross, *Women Facing War* (Geneva: ICRC, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> This category originates outside the academy, in the form of commissioned research, consultancy, evaluation, etc., and is specifically related to policy needs.



Guatemala, and Rwanda and a time scale of three decades. This approach reflects the predominance of comparative studies in this field, an element that takes us back to some of the basic issues of methodology.

Indra's theme of forced migration, "the chronic national, international and environmental forces generating . . . movements of people," which she counterposes to "earlier, narrower definitions of political refugees" (xii), is not tied specifically to a context of armed conflict, although conflict does constitute a major element in the collection. The contributions also range over communities displaced by dams, political refugees in North America, and large-scale population movements following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Indra's opening chapter offers a very well-developed and historically grounded analysis encompassing discourses in feminist anthropology, development, and forced migration, with some convincing parallels between the trajectory of women and development and the shorter history of women in forced migration (WIFM). She recognizes that WIFM "continues to gain strength and influence in research and in the institutional charters of organizations dealing with aid, refugee determination, resettlement, and development. Slowly, it is becoming a fully legitimate, institutionalized element of forced migration discourse" (17). At the same time, there remains "a significant gap between WIFM's incorporation into forced migration bureaucratic charters, research, and discourse and its incorporation into forced migration aid and development practice" (17).

The diversity of content and background in the subsequent eighteen chapters makes an overall assessment difficult. There is a continuing exploration of conceptual and epistemological issues in the contributions of Elizabeth Colson, Carolyn Nordstrom, and Wenona Giles, complemented by the inclusion of an interview with Barbara Harrell-Bond, which provides some fascinating insights into the early years of refugee studies. Not all of the other chapters are as strong, with some appearing rather underdeveloped and overly descriptive, perhaps reflecting their origins as conference papers. The range of the remaining chapters also makes it quite difficult to navigate one's way through the volume as a whole. Nevertheless, all the contributions succeed in relating to the volume's theme of linking theory and practice in some form, such as Khadija Elmadmad's exposition of how the Islamic provision for *aman*—the sacred act of granting asylum—fails to be carried out by Islamic regimes. The final four chapters cover the factors that affect women seeking the security of asylum status in some industrialized nations (Canada, United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom); although specific legal provisions may have changed since publication, they are valuable reference material, particularly

on the realities of appeal tribunals (Heaven Crawley and Lisa Gilad). Altogether, therefore, this volume has a great deal to offer any reader concerned with the global scenario of armed conflict, environmental stress, large-scale displacement, and the desperate search for security.

Mertus has also explored these themes in depth in relation to the breakup of the former Yugoslavia.<sup>3</sup> This is supplemented in *War's Offensive on Women* by a case study on Afghanistan by Judy Benjamin (prior to the Taliban regime and during the later 1990s). Although, as noted, the book is short (less than two hundred pages), it still demonstrates a well-structured balance among an introductory overview of gender and humanitarian action, case studies, the changing legal framework of humanitarian and refugee law, and priorities for policy making. The opening chapter integrates its conceptual and empirical material coherently and with due regard to the realities of work on the front line of humanitarian agencies. Like Indra, Mertus notes a significant shift in discourse and practice, noting that "the benefits of the groundswell created by the 1995 World Conference of Women . . . which mobilized women at the grassroots level throughout the world, are still being realized" (xii). She is also frank about limitations and continuing resistance, distinguishing between institutional factors that are not necessarily gender specific, such as decentralized management, and the risks that agency staff may run if they take up gender issues too enthusiastically (xii). As with Indra's work, there is an underlying conceptual framework on violence against women that can, for example, encompass rape as an act of aggression in both war and peace. She is also aware of the gendered effects of conflict on women's reproductive rights, such as the lack of contraception that women in Sarajevo experienced during the war, which exposed them to unsafe terminations (12).

The compression of Mertus's material means that some important questions go unanswered. For example, she states that "the case of Bosnia was a turning point in international recognition of protection for women in conflict and in attempts by governments and aid workers to solve the problems of women and girls" (20). Was this simply because Bosnia was a war within Europe? How do we incorporate the massacre of men and boys into a gendered analysis? However, the two initial chapters offer an effective synthesis of research findings, which would encourage the reader to explore further. The succeeding chapter provides a route map for those

<sup>3</sup> Julie Mertus, *Kosovo. How Myths and Truths Started a War* (Berkeley: University of California, 1999); and Julie Mertus, ed., *The Soutcast: Refugee Voices from Bosnia and Croatia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

unfamiliar with the legal framework. Finally, "Looking Ahead" takes on the challenge of changing humanitarian institutions, citing good practices that have been incorporated into procedures, such as training sessions for management and field staff on women's human rights within the context of humanitarian law. To me, however, this chapter reveals the origins of the book most closely, since it comes close to lapsing into a "wish list" of recommendations, which do not realistically reflect the earlier appreciation of constraints and tensions and the risk of backlash against gender advocates.

Turning to *Women and Civil War*, we find ourselves confronted by a wealth of empirical detail on women's experiences of war and their organizational response but not a matching conceptual grasp. Kumar's stated objective includes the specific brief of evaluating "how successful have the organizations been in empowering women?" (2). Yet this is not accompanied by the kind of reflection on the content of "empowerment" that characterizes feminist work in, for example, gender and development.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Kumar lays himself open to a charge of naïveté when he expresses himself surprised that insecurity for women during hostilities "only improved only marginally when hostilities ceased" (8) and that "the conflicts generated a subculture of violence [against women]—one that condoned violence and viewed violent behaviour as normal" (14). This highlights the contrast between his approach and a feminist grasp of the everyday normality of gendered violence.

The country profiles in the overview chapter are individually of interest and, as with Indra's collection, it is helpful to have material on the former Soviet Union included, in the form of the Georgian case study (Thomas Buck, Alice L. Morton, Susan Allen Nan, and Feride Zurikashvili). However, such a broad sweep brings the issue of methodological validity into question. The central chapters are concerned with "postconflict" responses from the profiled countries but without an indication from Kumar of what constitutes "peace" in gendered terms. By contrast, they individually contain many important findings. Martha Walsh's study of Bosnia and Herzegovina carefully acknowledges the dilemmas of women-run organizations in postconflict scenarios, where "the impact of humanitarian assistance is overshadowed by more lucrative infrastructure and other construction-related projects operated primarily by men" (180). I find Kumar's concluding chapters overly optimistic about prospects for the sustainability of women's organiza-

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Jo Townsend, *Questioning Empowerment: Working with Women in Honduras* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

tions; indeed, at times he even seems to ignore the empirical data of the case studies on the extent of male—and often female—resistance to those organizations' activities. Overall, these volumes illustrate both the strengths and the "growing pains" of our knowledge about the lives of women and men in conflict situations. 1

*Frontline Feminisms: Women, War, and Resistance.* Edited by Marguerite R. Waller and Jennifer Rycenga. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 2000.

*States of Conflict: Gender, Violence and Resistance.* Edited by Susie Jacobs, Ruth Jacobson, and Jennifer Marchbank. London and New York: Zed Books, 2000.

*Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence.* Edited by Caroline O. N. Moser and Fiona C. Clark. London and New York: Zed Books, 2001.

Katharine H. S. Moon, *Wellesley College*

**T**he three volumes under review reflect the diverse ways in which women and men have been engaging politics and political change in their local communities or refugee settlements, in their private lives and international organizations, and through informal activities and transnational activism. The compilations of research, experience, policy measures, and lessons learned focus on the various social patterns, identities, and political structures that shape the relationships between violence and gender, and violence and women's lives. *Frontline Feminisms* offers the greatest diversity of authors (e.g., scholars, activists, artists, resistance fighters, community organizers, and union leaders) and the widest range of discussions regarding violence (e.g., police brutality, abuse in prisons, "domestic violence," war and armed conflict, militarized sexual violence, as well as economic and racial violence). *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors?* offers the most well-organized and tightly framed theoretical and empirical analyses of violence, gender, women, regeneration, and reconstruction. Many of the chapters therein challenge the general "received knowledge" about women's and men's relationship to violence and offer critical engagement with feminist and conventional scholarship in the social sciences. Together, the books question the relationship between theory and practice

and invite comparative analysis among disciplines, grassroots experiences, personal backgrounds, and cultural contexts. I focus below on understanding public-private distinctions and women's agency as they relate to violence and efforts to overcome it.

Several of the authors demonstrate theoretically and empirically the symbiotic, overlapping nature—in contrast to the masculine, dualistic categorization—of private and public forms of violence. In “Public Imprisonment and Private Violence,” Angela Davis draws the intimate connections between organized and “unorganized” forms of violence, arguing that the historically smaller numbers of imprisoned women versus men in many societies result from the “social sanctioning of private violence” in lieu of direct punishment by the state (*Frontline*, 7). Davis also reminds us of the private forms of violence and punishment—sexual abuse of women—that are inflicted on female prisoners by officials of the state in public spaces, that is, prisons (14). Similarly, Nancy Keefe Rhodes cogently shows how public and private are conflated through acts of police violence in the United States (beating, trashing, “passive misconduct,” and harassment of the homeless) and argues that “women and children are becoming the direct targets of a more guerilla-like police warfare inside homes” (*Frontline*, 380). Here, she draws connections between the trashing of homes by U.S. police in urban areas, the bulldozing of Palestinian homes by Israeli forces, and the armed invasion of private homes in Northern Ireland.

While Rhodes and Davis start with assumptions about punishment-prisons and police violence that are centered on men's experiences and masculine norms in order to discuss their implications for gender and their impact on women's lives, Dubravka Zarkov starts with the common association of war and sexual violence against women in order to analyze depictions of male-on-male sexual violence in Croatian newspapers. Her research is original for inquiring into why sexual violence against men during the war in the former Yugoslavia was largely invisible and not a public issue. But her important contribution to our collective understanding of men's and women's relationships to the nation and the primacy of heterosexual masculinity as the symbolic representative and arbiter of “the ethnic Self” (*Victims*, 81) is based on a rather thin layer of evidence: six articles published between a two-year period in the main Croatian and Serbian daily and weekly, respectively.

In addressing the meanings and practices of “agency,” many of the contributors remind us that women's agency in the context of violence or war is both a complicated concept and a complex experience. Simply put, how are we to define agency? Recognize it? Exercise it? Make it

efficacious for what end? Donny Meertens and Jacqueline Siapno argue that agency may not be action in an overt, externally recognizable, and organizationally articulated sense. Meertens houses agency for female survivors of arbitrary violence in Colombia in the larger concept of the "life project." It is "more than the satisfaction of immediate needs: it comprises reconstruction of social texture, autonomy and self-esteem—all part of the social identity of the displaced, of the meaning they give to their existence" (*Victims*, 144). In her view, agency is the individual and collective resurrection of trust in social relations, the central task being to restore and rebuild trust in one's identity and relations. For Siapno, agency for many Acehnese and East Timorese women entails active cynicism toward male-dominated nationalist movements, as well as the behind-the-scenes exercise of courage: "while in Aceh and East Timor, it is predominantly the women who go through the laborious processes of negotiations with human rights lawyers and the military to seek the release of their male kin, many of them go through these struggles silently" (*Frontline*, 287).

All three volumes also include narratives or analyses of women as more conventionally recognizable agents—soldiers, guerillas, participants in mob violence, political resisters, and community activists. Urvashi Butalia (*Victims*) provokes us to reconsider women's agency as an assumed good in her excellent article on Indian women as perpetrators of violence in Hindu nationalist movements. In contrast, Benina Berger Gould's account of Tibetan women's activism (*Frontline*) illustrates how religious ritual and peaceful political action became one and the same in confronting Chinese rule. But she also mentions the fact that their history of resistance involved violence as well (before the 1959 nonviolent women's uprising and also in 1965–77), a point usually overlooked or not known by most in the West. Here, an explanation of how and why the women shifted between violent and nonviolent action would help us better understand the political forces and personal motivations that shape women's relationships to various modes of political and social action.

Sorayya Shahri, a former member of the anti-Khomeini National Liberation Army of Iran (NLA), offers a rich and provocative testimony of how women *became* warriors. Although she draws a heroic portrait of Iranian women in the resistance movement, she offers candid accounts of how women and men struggled to grow and evolve into good fighters and loyal NLA members. When the idea of training women to be part of the armored force was initially introduced, Shahri admits, "the women were generally unwilling to take coed courses." She attributes this to "their view of themselves as the weaker sex" (*Frontline*, 188). But "one by one,

we overcame the mind blocks" (188). Indeed, NLA women became active in the tank and airborne divisions as well as the operational and general commands, areas that had traditionally been considered male terrain. Shahri also powerfully narrates how personal sacrifice and transformation by women and men are related to their notion of being a good soldier for the cause: "To shatter the notion of male superiority, which bound the hands and feet of our men and women, we voluntarily ended our marriages in divorce so that no one had any responsibility to anyone or anything but the all-out war on the Khomeini regime" (190–91).

In addition to the focus on individual women, all three volumes include studies of women's organizations as agents of reconstruction. Based on their quantitative and qualitative analysis of men's and women's organizations in several different areas of violence-torn Colombia and Guatemala, Caroline Moser and Cathy McIlwaine argue that women-dominated, or women-run, organizations are better at building productive social capital (trust, associational life, resolution of conflicts, and the generation of economic and social resources) than male-dominated organizations. For example, in Colombia, child-care organizations, or community homes, were run entirely by "community mothers" who generate high levels of trust "among all in the community, regardless of age or sex" (*Victims*, 193). The lesson is this: pay attention to gender and assist the development of women-run organizations to help reduce violence and restore the social and economic fabric. The chapter is a valuable contribution, for we have scant understanding of how "social capital" and civil society are not gender-neutral in theory and practice, despite their current popularity in social science and policy circles.

But taken together with Meertens's finding of the instability of Colombian village women's roles as mothers—"Women, when seen in their motherly roles, are accused [by guerilla groups, the Colombian military and paramilitaries] of raising new enemies or hiding their children to avoid recruitment" (*Victims*, 139)—it leaves us to question the *process* by which women move from lack of control over even traditional gender identities in violence situations to being agents of building trust and community based on those same roles. How do the roles change, regain status, and for which women? How do restored traditional roles conflict with newly developed gender roles for women surviving and adapting to violence?

All three books would have benefited from closer coordination among authors and tighter editing to avoid generalizations and repetition of ideas, to close the gap between analytical chapters and those that primarily describe "women's status" in any given country or organizational context, and to balance inclusiveness and diversity with selectivity. *States of Conflict*

is the least innovative of the three books, for many of its chapters serve as literature surveys, rather than new research or analysis of already salient issues. For example, Francine D'Amico reiterates many existing critiques of the masculine soldier-citizen model and offers an alternative phrasing, "pluralist citizenship," to incorporate not only legal equality but "also the diversity of cultural groups within a particular state and the human rights of all" (*States*, 118). But she does not explain what the legal, social, and practical content and practice of such citizenship would be.

Also, feminist critiques of citizenship need to move beyond this. For one, we need to explore the meaning of citizenship in non-Western societies such as Japan, where the soldier-citizen model has been disparaged legally and culturally since the end of World War II. Also, in light of some European countries' (e.g., France) recent discontinuation of the draft, we need to question the implications of this for gender identity and relations in the immediate and long term. Moreover, globalization has established what anthropologist Aihwa Ong calls "homo economicus" as the privileged form of masculinized identity in many parts of the world, especially the Pacific Rim.<sup>1</sup> The real world, both states and societies, is experimenting with various forms of belonging and territoriality. Canada, Australia, and the United States have welcomed Asian capital, particularly from Hong Kong and Taiwan, with offers of permanent residence or facilitated citizenship. And the South Korean government in recent years has been playing with the idea of granting permanent residence rights to privileged diasporic communities around the world, that is, those with capital. Further, the extensive body of scholarship in the past decade on the changing meaning and content of citizenship and national identity offers numerous conceptions such as denizenship, "new citizenship," transnational citizenship, and plural citizenship.<sup>2</sup> Feminist scholarship needs to be informed

<sup>1</sup> See Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini, eds., *Ungrounded Empires: The Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Transnationalism* (New York: Routledge, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> See Yasemin Soysal, *Limits of Citizenship: Migrants and Postnational Membership in Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); Zag Layton-Henry, ed., *The Political Rights of Migrant Workers in Western Europe* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1990); Michael Hanagan and Charles Tilly, eds., *Extending Citizenship, Reconfiguring States* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999); Linda Basch, Nina Glick-Schiller, and Cristina B. Szanton, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, Pa.: Gordon & Breach, 1994); Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1999); Peter Schuck, "Plural Citizenships," in *Immigration and Citizenship*, ed. Noah Pickus (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998), 149–91; Thomas Faist, "Transnationalization in International Migration: Implications for the Study of Citizenship," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 2 (2000): 189–222.



by these larger debates in different disciplines while simultaneously critiquing them through gender analysis. In doing so, we can pursue questions about continuity and change in the content, form, processes, and contexts of violence and conflict, and in women's relationships and responses to them. 1

*Women and International Peacekeeping.* Edited by Louise Olsson and Torunn L. Tryggestad. London: Frank Cass, 2001.

*Gender, Peace and Conflict.* Edited by Inger Skjelsbæk and Dan Smith. London: Sage, 2001.

**Sandra Whitworth, York University**

In her closing remarks to *Women and International Peacekeeping*, Cynthia Enloe notes that anyone interested in security or peacekeeping now needs to develop understandings "of how women and men are positioned differently in the fuelling and resolving of societal violence" (112). In this important regard, both of these collections are timely contributions toward the development of that kind of understanding. *Gender, Peace and Conflict* contains both theoretical and empirical chapters that illustrate well the differential impact of armed conflicts on women and men, and the ways in which women have organized in response to those conflicts. *Women and International Peacekeeping* explores the arguments used both to resist and to encourage women's involvement in peacekeeping and provides a number of case-study examples of situations where the presence of women in peacekeeping operations seems to have had significant impact on the missions.

In both collections, the most successful chapters are those that focus on empirical case studies. In *Gender, Peace and Conflict* the final three chapters, on Colombia by Eva Irene Tuft, on the former Yugoslavia by Svetlana Slapsak, and on Sri Lanka by Kumundi Samuel, each set the stage by providing the historical context of the conflicts in these countries and then point to the complex and sometimes contradictory ways in which women have been affected by the conflicts. For example, Tuft points out in the Colombian case that while men have been the principal victims of civil and political human rights violations, including violations of the right to life, the right not to be subjected to torture, and the right to freedom

of speech, the human rights violations experienced by women are usually in the realm of economic, social, and cultural rights: women are often forced to flee their homes; suffer the loss of male breadwinners; and if they can find work at all, it is usually in the low-paid informal economy (150–51). Conflict resolution processes, Tuft argues, must be informed by an understanding of the differential impact of the conflict on women and men, and must include as well all civil society actors, not simply the actors to a conflict.

Samuel picks up on this theme in her chapter on Sri Lanka, where she describes the different strategies used by women and women's organizations to ensure that their voices were heard by formal actors. This included following a tactic employed in Argentina by the Mothers of the Plaza del Mayo, organizing as mothers to call for justice, accountability, and the return of their children. As Samuel points out, this has had both positive and negative consequences. Positively, women who organized as mothers were accessible to women from all sides of the conflict and were able to express political demands and moral outrage in a situation where male forms of struggle were either ineffective or impossible because of political violence. More negatively, organizing as mothers reinforced stereotypical visions of the appropriate role and attitudes of women and ultimately "failed to give them any independent or sustainable political strength" (192–93).

In *Women and International Peacekeeping*, chapters by Kari Karamé on the involvement of Norwegian women in the United Nations Interim Forces in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and by Louise Olsson on gender mainstreaming in the United Nations Transitional Assistance Group in Namibia (UNTAG) provide important information both on the difference made by women's presence on peacekeeping missions and by thinking through the gendered implications of a peacekeeping mission. In Lebanon, for example, Karamé describes the ways in which military women often visited with local women during their off-duty time, exchanging stories and learning local customs. In a mission where the majority of the local population was female, such contacts facilitated the greater acceptance of the mission and facilitated also, according to Karamé, the fulfillment of the mandate and the security of the troops on the mission. In Namibia, a mission with a very high level of female participation at all levels of the operation, there were reportedly few cases of sexual harassment of UN personnel and local citizens. This resulted not only from the presence of women on the mission, according to Olsson, but from the attitude of the leadership—both male and female—that sexual harassment or sexual exploitation would not be tolerated. The presence of women on the mission—and the attitude

their male colleagues displayed toward them—also positively modeled UN commitments to equal rights of women and men in a way that does not occur in missions predominantly staffed by men.

While both collections offer fruitful empirical information, they are more uneven in their theoretical treatments. *Gender, Peace and Conflict*, for example, provides two very useful chapters, by Drude Dahlerup and by Anuradha Mitra Chenoy and Achin Vanaik, on the question of whether a “critical mass” of women, one that would alter the gender balance of decision-making structures, would really make a difference in terms of peace, security, and conflict resolution (their respective answers: it is not really clear, but not likely, without other changes such as greater democratization). However, much of the rest of the theoretical chapters is devoted to different critiques of the problem of essentialism. They are all sound arguments against essentialism, but one wonders whether these are the only theoretical critiques to be raised around issues of gender, peace, and conflict. What of asking, for example, about the role of the United Nations in framing contemporary debates on gender and security, and the limitations of that framing? Does the embeddedness of the United Nations in liberal assumptions undermine, in the end, arguments that require (non-essentialized) discussions of difference?

It likely would have been difficult to raise such critiques in this collection, in no small part because it is a product of a 1996 United Nations Expert Group Meeting organized by the United Nations’s Division for the Advancement of Women and the Oslo-based International Peace Research Institute. Dorota Gierycz’s chapter in this collection would have been an excellent place to explore such challenges, but Gierycz offers instead a more celebratory account of the history of the United Nations’s role in issues of women, peace, and security. It is a thorough, if uncritical, history, but it should have been updated to incorporate UN Security Council Resolution 1325 of October 2000, arguably the United Nations’s largest single achievement in the area of women, peace, and security.

There is a similar unevenness in the more theoretical chapters of *Women and International Peacekeeping*. As in the Smith and Skjelsbæk volume, there is little in the way of critical analysis of either the United Nations or even of the political implications of peacekeeping missions. Getting more women into those missions is taken as a largely unproblematic aim throughout the volume, and little is raised in the form of critiques of militarism or the highly militarized form that UN peacekeeping missions have generally taken. While the Smith and Skjelsbæk volume devotes too much attention to problems of essentialism, the Olsson and Tryggestad volume, by contrast, would have benefited from a little more reflection

on the issue. Gerard J. DeGroot, for example, employs the stereotypes associated with essentialism repeatedly through his chapter, oddly cautioning readers in the conclusion that "peacekeeping is a practical problem in which gender theory has little place" and that the United Nations "might want its female warriors to remain womanly" (37).

These criticisms, however, should not detract from the overall contribution that each of these collections makes. If there are questions that still need to be raised and theoretical puzzles that still need to be explored, this only reflects the extent to which single volumes can never cover every facet of a debate. These are both engaging collections that unsettle prevailing assumptions about women, armed conflict, and peacekeeping and signal to us just how much more work still needs to be done in this area. *Gender, Peace and Conflict* and *Women and International Peacekeeping* both provide excellent beginnings. 1

## United States and International Notes

*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* welcomes announcements of fellowships, calls for papers, upcoming special issues, and new journals for the "United States and International Notes" section.

### Announcements and calls for papers

*Meridians*, a new peer-reviewed, feminist interdisciplinary journal whose goal is to provide a forum for the finest scholarship and creative work by and about women of color in U.S. and international contexts, seeks to publish work that is grounded in the particularities of history, economics, geography, class, and culture and is substantive and readable, as well as relevant and useful to researchers, educators, students, and practitioners. The editor of *Meridians* invites submissions of essays, interviews, poetry, fiction, theater, artwork, and photo essays, as well as political manifestos, position papers, and archival documents of continuing interest. Please send submissions to *Meridians*, Smith College, Northampton, MA 01063; e-mail [meridians@smith.edu](mailto:meridians@smith.edu). Deadline is ongoing.

*Sexuality and Culture*, a forum for the discussion and analysis of ethical, cultural, psychological, social, and political issues related to sexual relationships and sexual behavior, welcomes unsolicited submissions throughout the year. Theoretical and empirical articles should be submitted to Dr. Roberto Refinetti, Circadian Rhythm Laboratory, University of South Carolina, P.O. Box 1337, Walterboro, SC 29488; e-mail [refinetti@circadian.org](mailto:refinetti@circadian.org). Books for potential review and unsolicited book reviews should be sent to Dr. Jakob Pastoetter, Magnus Hirschfeld Archive for Sexology, Humboldt University, Prenzlauer Promenade 149-152, 13189 Berlin, Germany; e-mail [jmpastoetter@compuserve.de](mailto:jmpastoetter@compuserve.de). Deadline is ongoing.

*FEMSPEC*, an interdisciplinary feminist journal dedicated to critical and creative works in the realms of science fiction, fantasy, magical realism, myth, folklore, and other supernatural genres, is accepting submissions for a special issue on black women's speculative fiction. This special issue will offer a range of critical approaches to black women's speculative fiction, film, other art forms, and black feminist theory. Critical essays will either take on a black feminist/womanist analysis or provide a strong gender critique. For further information or queries, please contact the special issue guest editors: Yolanda Hood, e-mail [yhood@unca.edu](mailto:yhood@unca.edu), and Gwendolyn D. Pough, e-mail [pough002@umn.edu](mailto:pough002@umn.edu). Submissions marked "Speculative Black Women: Magic, Fantasy, and the Supernatural" should be sent to *FEMSPEC*, Caddo Gap Press, 3145 Geary Boulevard, PMB 275, San Francisco, CA 94118. Please see the Web site at <http://www.csuohio.edu/femspec>. Deadline is July 30, 2003.

The winter 2003 issue of *Academic Exchange Quarterly* (AEQ) will be devoted to teaching environmental literature, including discussions of pedagogical strategies for teaching environmental literature and/or discussions of the environment as a tool for teaching any period or genre of literature. Contributions are welcome from many perspectives, including those dealing with feminist perspectives, interdisciplinary approaches, and approaches for teaching environmental literature in a particular time period or genre. Manuscripts are sought from those whose experiences, methods, and assessments in either a high school or college classroom have produced meaningful ways to teach environmental literature. Submissions guidelines are available at <http://rapidintellect.com/AEQweb/rufen1.htm>. For more information, contact Dr. Kandi Tayebi at [eng\\_kat@shsu.edu](mailto:eng_kat@shsu.edu). Deadline for submission is August 2003.

The editors of *Sonia on My Mind: A Collection of Scholarly Essays and Literary Criticism* invite submissions on the life and work of prolific poet Sonia Sanchez. The anthology will offer comparative studies on Sanchez's work. It will also examine Sanchez's expansive, diverse literary canon, her participation in the Black Arts Movement and the Black Studies Movement, and her place in the African oral tradition, as well as her influence among some of the younger, spoken word, hip hop artists and writers of today. Needed are comparative studies of Sanchez's work, scholarly essays, articles, reviews, photos, interviews, quotes of Sanchez, artwork, and literary criticism. E-mail submissions and previously published articles accepted. Please mail hard copy of submission to Jamie Walker, c/o Sonia on My Mind Anthology Collection, J. D. Publishing Group, P.O. Box 73295, Washington, DC 20056; e-mail [orders@jdpublishing.com](mailto:orders@jdpublishing.com) or [jamedwalker@yahoo.com](mailto:jamedwalker@yahoo.com). Information and submission guidelines are available on-line at <http://www.jdpublishing.com/sanchezanthology.htm>. Deadline for submissions is September 9, 2003.

The *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* (ARM) seeks submissions for a special issue on mothering, law, politics, and public policy, to be published in spring/summer 2004. The journal welcomes submissions from scholars, students, activists, lawyers, policy makers, artists, and others who work or research in this area. The journal also welcomes creative reflections such as poetry, short stories, and artwork on the subject. If you are interested in writing a book review, please contact Cheryl Dobinson at [cjdobins@yorku.ca](mailto:cjdobins@yorku.ca). For more information, contact ARM, 726 Atkinson College, York University, 4700 Keele Street, Toronto, ON, Canada, M3J 1P3; telephone (416) 736-2100, x60366; e-mail [arm@yorku.ca](mailto:arm@yorku.ca). Visit the Web site at <http://www.yorku.ca/crm>. Deadline is November 1, 2003.

#### **Call for artwork**

*Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* seeks submissions for cover art. Published quarterly by the University of Chicago Press and distributed internationally,

*Signs* is an interdisciplinary academic journal that focuses on issues of gender, race, class, nation, and sexuality. Submissions are not limited by style or medium (photography and film stills are welcome) but should reproduce well in black and white; content should represent a point of view on women's issues. One full-color cover will be published annually. Send up to ten labeled slide duplicates to Art Editor, *Signs*, University of California, Los Angeles, 1400H Public Policy Building, Box 957122, Los Angeles, CA 90095-7122. E-mail [signs@signs.ucla.edu](mailto:signs@signs.ucla.edu). A small honorarium is available. Deadline is ongoing.

## About the Contributors

**Mikela Aboltz** was born in Uruguay. She moved to the United States to study anthropology and became an activist through her involvement in student organizations. She joined the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in 2000 as an intern and assisted in the development of UN Security Council Resolution 1325. Since then, she has been working passionately for PeaceWomen as a program associate while studying for her global professional masters in business administration at Fordham University. Recent publications include, "Women Are Opening Doors: Security Council Resolution 1325 in Afghanistan," in *Women for Afghan Women: Shattering Myths and Claiming the Future*, ed. Sunita Mehta (New York: Palgrave St. Martin's, 2002).

**Saba Bahar** teaches English at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. She is the author of *Mary Wollstonecraft's Social and Aesthetic Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002) and is coediting, with Valérie Coessy, "Féminisme et littérature," a special issue of *Nouvelles questions féministes* 22, no. 2 (2003), on feminism and literary history.

**Eric M. Blanchard** (eblanchard@usc.edu) is a graduate student in the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California.

**Carol Cohn** (ccmcohn@aol.com) is a senior research scholar in the Department of Political Science, Wellesley College. Her research and writing have focused on gender and international security, with extensive work in the area of weapons of mass destruction, including, most recently, work with feminist philosopher Sara Ruddick (on "A Feminist Ethical Perspective on Weapons of Mass Destruction," in *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction*, ed. Sohail Hashmi and Phillip Valera, under review at Cambridge University Press). Her current research examines gender mainstreaming in international peace and security institutions, focusing on the passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and the ongoing efforts by nongovernmental organizations and UN agencies to ensure its implementation.

**Cynthia Enloe** is professor of government at Clark University and a member of Clark's women's studies Ph.D. faculty. Among her most recent books are *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics*, rev. ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), and *The Morning After: Sexual Politics at the End of the Cold War* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).



**Karen Garner** directs the Women's Center at Florida International University. As a Fulbright Scholar in spring 2003, she taught U.S. women's history and women's studies at the University of Vilnius Gender Studies Center in Vilnius, Lithuania. She has just published a book titled *Precious Fire: Maud Russell and the Chinese Revolution* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003).

**Cressida J. Heyes** (cressida.heyes@ualberta.ca) is associate professor of philosophy at the University of Alberta in Edmonton. She is the author of *Line Drawings: Defining Women through Feminist Practice* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2000) and the editor of *The Grammar of Politics: Wittgenstein and Political Philosophy* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2003). She is currently writing a series of essays on sexual subjectivities and feminist communities, one of which was published as "Can There Be a Queer Politics of Recognition?" in *Recognition, Responsibility, and Rights: Feminist Ethics and Social Theory*, ed. Hilde Lindmann Nelson and Robin Fiore (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003).

**Felicity Hill** is a consultant on peace and security at the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Before joining UNIFEM, she worked for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) in Geneva and then in New York from 1998–2001 as director of WILPF's UN office. She helped to form the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace and Security and serves on the board of the Centre for European Security and Disarmament and the Global Action to Prevent War initiative. Her activism began in Australia, where she worked on campaigns to raise awareness about violence against women, the privatization of tertiary education, uranium mining, and the arms trade.

**Myra J. Hird** (m.hird@qup.ac.uk) is an assistant professor of sociology at Queen's University, Belfast. She is the author of several articles on new materialism, sexual difference, intersex, and transgender, including "Gender's Nature: Intersexuality, Transsexualism and the 'Sex'/'Gender' Binary," *Feminist Theory* 1, no. 3 (2000): 347–64, "For a Sociology of Transsexualism," *Sociology* 36, no. 2 (2002): 577–98, "Out/performing Our Selves—Invitation for Dialogue," *Sexualities* 5, no. 2 (2002): 219–38, and "Re(pro)ducing Sexual Difference" in *Parallax* (forthcoming). She is completing a solo-authored book on the relation of intersex and transsex to theories of sexual difference.

**Fujiko Isoomura** was born in Tokyo. After attending the Musashino Art University in Tokyo, she graduated from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She then earned her masters of fine arts at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. She has received the Wisconsin Arts Board Visual Arts Fellowship as well as various awards from juried competitions and has been exhibiting her artwork throughout the United States and internationally. Her work can also be viewed online at <http://fujikoisomura.womanmade.net>.

**Ruth Jacobson** is a research fellow at the University of Bradford's Department of Peace Studies and also coordinates the department's unit for the study of gender and conflict. She has worked in war situations in Mozambique and is currently researching the peace processes in Angola.

**Katharine H. S. Moon** is the Jane Bishop Associate Professor of Political Science at Wellesley College and Asian Policy Fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the George Washington University in Washington, D.C. She is the author of *Sex among Allies: Military Prostitution in U.S.-Korea Relations* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997; Korean ed., Seoul: Sam-in, 2002) and other work on women and gender in international relations, migrant workers, and social movements in East Asia. She is writing a book on "anti-Americanism" in South Korea from the perspective of democratization and social movement analysis, assessing the implications for foreign policy. Moon has served in the Office of the Senior Coordinator for Women's Issues in the U.S. Department of State and as a trustee of Smith College. She serves on the editorial board of several journals of international relations and consults for nongovernmental organizations in the United States and Korea.

**Nancy A. Naples** is professor of sociology and women's studies at the University of Connecticut. Her intersectional research explores processes of politicization, community-based organizing, and the contradictory role of the state in women's social and political citizenship. Her scholarship also focuses on bridging the so-called gap between theory and practice as well as explicating a feminist epistemology of activist research. She is author of *Grassroots Warriors* (New York: Routledge, 1998), editor of *Community Activism and Feminist Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1998), and coeditor, with Manisha Desai, of *Women's Activism and Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2002). Her most recent book is *Feminism and Method: Ethnography, Discourse Analysis, and Activist Research* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

**Carol Osborne** (osborne@coastal.edu) received her Ph.D. in English from the University of Virginia. As an assistant professor at Murray State University from 1998–2002, she taught courses in contemporary literature and pedagogy and served as director of humanities. Now employed by Coastal Carolina University, she prepares masters candidates to teach in the secondary schools. Her prior publications include "From Primals to Inner Children: Atwood's Reflections on Therapy," *LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory* 6, nos. 3–4 (1995): 181–95, "Fashioning an Identity: Battles over the Zoot," *Popular Culture Review* 7, no. 1 (1996): 97–110, and "The Holden Connection: Web Forum Conversations between University and Secondary Students," *Kentucky English Bulletin* 51, no. 1 (2001): 17–28.

**Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya** is currently working in humanitarian assistance, developing education programs for refugees in West Africa. Her work combines education with core issues of gender and security. She is the former coordinator for the NGO Working Group on Women, Peace, and Security, an expert coalition that provides counsel to UN bodies. She also helped launch the advocacy Web site <http://www.peacewomen.org> for the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)-United Nations office. Sara is a graduate of Columbia University Teachers College. She speaks English, French, Spanish, Russian, Fon, and Mandingo and plays hand drums in her spare time.

**Nadine Puechguirbal** ([puechguirbal@un.org](mailto:puechguirbal@un.org)) works at the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations in New York, where she is part of a research and project unit that monitors crises in countries with peacekeeping missions. She also conducts training for military and police contingents of peacekeepers and has facilitated gender training courses in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Côte d'Ivoire, France, and Canada. She is a Ph.D. candidate on the subject "Gender Perspectives in Post Conflict: Comparative Study between Somalia, Rwanda and Eritrea" at the Department of Political Sciences, Université de Paris I (Sorbonne), in Paris.

**Pam Speas** is program director of the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice and has been involved in the International Criminal Court negotiations and the legal and educational work of the caucus since 1997. Prior to joining the Women's Caucus for Gender Justice, she worked with campaigns within the United States for the recognition of economic and social rights and on issues of consumer protection and housing rights. Before attending law school in 1995, she worked as a journalist for six years and was also a volunteer counselor with survivors of sexual assault at a community-based crisis center.

**Judith Stiehm** is professor of political science at Florida International University, where she has served as provost and academic vice president for four years. She has taught at San Francisco State University, the University of Wisconsin, the University of California, Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. She has been a visiting professor at the U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute and at the Strategic Studies Institute at Carlisle Barracks. Her books include *Nonviolent Power: Active and Passive Resistance* (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1972), *Bring Me Men and Women: Mandated Change at the U.S. Air Force Academy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), *Arms and the Enlisted Woman* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1989), *It's Our Military, Too! Women and the U.S. Military* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), and *The U.S. Army War College: Military Education in a Democracy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002).

**Sherrill Whittington** is currently a project manager for gender and peacekeeping in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations; she assumed this position after a two-year assignment as the head of the Gender Affairs Unit in the UN Peacekeeping Operation in East Timor (UNTAET). Prior to that she served at the UNICEF headquarters in New York, focusing on gender, humanitarian crises, and postconflict situations. Whittington has also worked with the Secretariat for the Fourth World Conference on Women, the Commonwealth of Learning, and the Australian government. She holds a master's of letters in Asian history and a master of arts in international relations.

**Sandra Whitworth** is associate professor of political science and women's studies at York University in Toronto. She is the author of *Feminism and International Relations: Towards a Political Economy of Gender in Multilateral Institutions* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994). She was the coauthor, with Dyan Mazurana, of the recent United Nations study on women, peace, and security, "Women, Peace and Security: Study Submitted by the Secretary-General Pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1325" (New York: United Nations, 2002; available at <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/index.html#wp8>). Currently she is finishing a book on gender, race, and the politics of peacekeeping ("Warrior Princes and the Politics of Peacekeeping: A Feminist Analysis," forthcoming, 2004).

**Lisa Yaszek** is assistant professor in the School of Literature, Communication, and Culture at the Georgia Institute of Technology, where she teaches courses on gender studies, science fiction, and contemporary literature. She recently published a book on cyborg writing titled *The Self Wired: Technology and Subjectivity in Contemporary Narrative* (New York: Routledge, 2002) and is currently working on a new book, "Galactic Suburbia: Midcentury Women's Science Fiction."

**Gillian Youngs** ([gy40le.ac.uk](mailto:gy40le.ac.uk)) is senior lecturer at the Centre for Mass Communication Research, University of Leicester, United Kingdom. She is coeditor, with Kathleen B. Jones and Rekha Pande, of *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, associate editor of *Development*, and a member of the editorial board of *Political Geography*. Her main areas of research are globalization, feminism, and information and communication technologies. She is active in national and international policy-related contexts and has made expert contributions to several UNESCO sections. Her recent publications include *International Relations in a Global Age: A Conceptual Challenge* (Cambridge: Polity, 1999) and the edited collection *Political Economy, Power and the Body: Global Perspectives* (London: Macmillan, 2000).

## Guidelines for Contributors

The editors invite submission of article-length manuscripts that might appropriately be published in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. We publish articles from a wide range of disciplines in a variety of voices—articles engaging gender, race, culture, class, nation, and/or sexuality. We are looking for lively, provocative essays that launch new inquiries or prompt intense debate; we publish essays not only in areas of scholarship familiar to *Signs* readers but in newly emergent fields relevant to women and gender as well. Essays may be discipline specific if they are cross-disciplinary in their theorizing, their methodology, or their sources.

*Signs* does not consider manuscripts that are under review elsewhere or that have been previously published. *Signs* does not accept unsolicited book reviews.

Each author (or set of coauthors) will receive 10 copies of the issue or a year's subscription (or renewal).

### Editorial procedures

All articles published in *Signs* are peer reviewed.

### Preparation of copy

1. Articles should not exceed a maximum length of 10,000 words, including references and endnotes. Please indicate the word count on the title page.

2. Type all copy—including endnotes and reference list—double-spaced on standard bond paper, allowing generous margins on the top, bottom, and sides.

3. A separate title page should include the article title and the author's name, postal address, telephone number, e-mail address, and fax number, if available. The first page of the manuscript should have the article title 2 inches from the top of the page. The text should start 2 inches below the title. To protect anonymity, the author's name *should not* appear on the manuscript, and all references in the body of the text and in endnotes that might identify the author to the reviewer should be removed and cited on a separate page. Articles that do not conform to these specifications will be returned to authors.

4. A high-quality photocopy of each illustration should accompany the manuscript. Reproduction-quality prints of illustrations will be required for manuscripts accepted for publication.

5. Submissions for regular issues should include a cover page with identifying information, 3 copies of the manuscript, and 3 copies of an abstract (of not more than 150 words). Please include a 3 1/2-inch high-density disk copy of the essay and abstract, preferably in MSWord (please specify word-processing software on disk). Send submission materials to the Editors, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, University of California, Los Angeles, 1400H Public Policy Building,

Los Angeles, CA 90095-7122. Manuscripts submitted to *Signs* will not be returned. Manuscripts submitted without abstracts will not be sent out for review.

### Citations and references

Submissions should follow the author-date system of documentation, with limited endnotes, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th ed.). (See chapter 16 outlining documentation for the social sciences.) The journal office may request full revision of manuscripts not meeting the CMS requirements for documentation.

References to works are given in the text in chronological order by enclosing the author's last name and the year of publication in parentheses (Miller 1978) and are keyed to an alphabetical list of references at the end of the article. Specific page or section references follow the date, preceded by a comma (Miller 1978, 234). Other examples are: (Miller and Jones 1978) for dual authorship; (Miller et al. 1978) for more than three authors; (Miller 1978a, 1978b) for two works by the same author in a single year; (Smith 1982; Chanock 1985; Robertson and Berger 1986) for two or more works by different authors.

Endnotes are used for material commenting on or adding to the text and should be used instead of parenthetical citations for references to more than three works, archival materials, unpublished interviews, and legal cases. Within endnotes, second and later references to a work should refer to the author's last name and date. Do not use *op. cit.* Endnotes should be typed double-spaced at the end of the article, following the list of references.

Full documentation appears in the references. References must list all works cited in the text, including citations in endnotes. List works alphabetically by author and, under author, by year of publication. References not cited in the text will be removed from the reference list. See the following examples. For additional information, see *The Chicago Manual of Style* (14th ed.).

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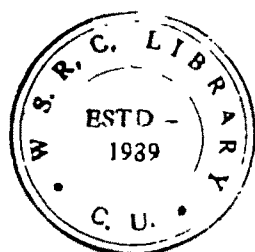
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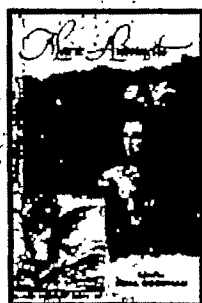
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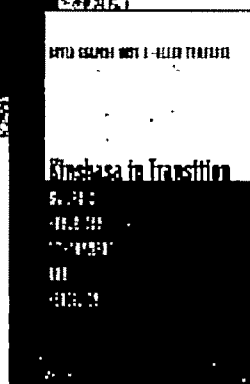
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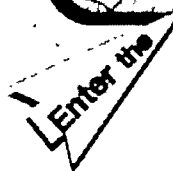


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